

**CONSOLAMINI COMMENTARY
SERIES:**

ALCUIN OF YORK ON REVELATION,

COMMENTARY

AND

THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL

(English and Latin)

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(English and Latin)

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These translations have been made from *Corpus Corporum of the Univeristy of Zurich* (mlat.uzh.ch), as well as *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio e Vaticanis Codicibus Edita ab A.M., Tomus IX* (1837). The second commentary has been transcribed and translated from images of a manuscript (*Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS Clm 13581* (c.9, *SanktEmmeram, Regensburg*)).

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Alcuin of York (735 - 804), was a famous scholar and theologian, who starting at a young age was educated at the cathedral school at York, where he became a monk and teacher, and served as a deacon. He would become the head of the school and even travelled the continent of Europe to acquire books for the great library in which the cathedral school of York was widely known for. He would later become an advisor on religious scholarship and education for Charlemagne, and joined the royal court in 781.

ALCUIN'S BIBLE COMMENTARIES

As a theologian, Alcuin wrote some commentaries on the Bible. He was not an original thinker but rather a compiler of quotes from earlier commentators, especially the Venerable Bede. Alcuin was influenced by Bede at an early age from his mentor Archbishop Ecgbert, who was a disciple of Bede. Throughout Alcuin's Bible commentaries he supplied little of his own interpretations when compared to his great dependence upon earlier patristic writers and commentators as well as Ambrose Autpert (730 – 784), who was a contemporary. Alcuin's work on Genesis was a questions and answers manual, similar to the one on Revelation. On the book of Genesis he was dependent upon St. Jerome, and *De Benedictionibus Patriarcharum* was derived from St. Augustine. On the Psalms (*De usu Psalmorum*) he drew from St. Augustine as well providing some of his own insights. On Ecclesiastes he drew from St.

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Jerome, and the Song of Songs from the Venerable Bede. On the Gospel of John he depended mainly upon St. Augustine, Gregory, and Bede. For Titus and Philemon he depended upon St. Jerome, and on Hebrews he relied upon a Latin translation of St. John Chrysostom. He is believed to have written upon the book of Proverbs and Ephesians but those works are unknown.¹ As for the book of Revelation, which is presented in this book, an incomplete commentary (ending at Rev. 12:12) has been attributed to Alcuin as well as a questions and answers manual. The primary source for the commentary on Revelation is Ambrose Autpert. The primary sources for the questions and answers manual is the Venerable Bede, but St. Gregory the Great (*Moralia*) is used extensively for the preface as well as the last section of the work.²

THE INCOMPLETE COMMENTARY

The incomplete commentary on Revelation (PL 100: 1086-1156) was written “at the end of the eighth century. Cardinal Angelo Mai discovered and published it in 1838; it exists only in a single manuscript, Vat. lat. 651 of the ninth century.”³ The commentary is divided into five books and covers the first five books of the commentary of Ambrose Autpert.⁴ Although there are differences of opinions of the Alcuinian authorship of the commentary, some very notable scholars support the position that Alcuin is the author while some other very notable scholars question the attribution. Some who question the authorship cite a sentence found in the commentary concerning Rev. 3:5, “*Magna nobis hoc loco oritur quaestio.*” It is thought

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that this likely refers to the Gottschalk controversy over predestination after the death of Alcuin.⁵ As mentioned above, the commentary of Ambrose Autpert was highly depended upon throughout, yet he admirably acknowledges in his preface the exegetical contributions on Revelation from Bede, Gregory the Great, Primasius, Tychonius, Victorinus, Jerome, and Augustine.

The approach to the book of Revelation by Alcuin, since he relies heavily upon Ambrose Autpert, saw the imagery in the book to be interpreted spiritually, not historically. Barbara Nolan explains...

Because the vision is intellectual, Alcuin argues, one cannot expect the linear narrative order proper to history, nor stable images with univocal meanings. John's vision, then, is allegory and not entirely coherent allegory at that. The *litera* must melt as its spiritual meanings are perceived. Bede had noted the apparent disorder of John's narration but had not discussed its implications. Alcuin, on the other hand, seeking a divine rationale for the surface difficulties of the story, had found it in his definition of "intellectual vision." In this way, narrative order, the sequence of imagery, the progress of the *historia* could all be subordinated to a moral (and preeminently rational) interpretation of individual images.⁶

THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL

The questions and answers manual (MS; Munich, B.S. Clm 13581, folios 3r-31r), which is considered by notable scholars to have possibly been composed by Alcuin, exists in one ninth century manuscript, "from the monastery of Sankt-Emmeram in Regensburg, now conserved in the

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Bayerisches Stadtbibliothek in Munich.”⁷ As mentioned above, this work depends very heavily upon Bede⁸ for the questions and answers portion itself, and Gregory the Great’s *Moralia* was quoted numerous times in the preface as well as the addition added immediately after the questions and answers. The answers provided for the questions were almost always directly quoted from Bede’s commentary preceded by not much more than citing the Scripture in the form of a question. Ann Matter explains...

The main part of the text is a series of questions taken from the text of the Apocalypse with the answers taken, in serial order, from the commentary on the Apocalypse of Bede. The questions lack the theological focus of Alcuin’s questions and answers on Genesis, but they do a thorough job of showing problems in the text, even problems of variant readings... Such a text, with no characterization of personal voice, is not really dialogue. Nor is it a theological text; its straightforward checking off of each verse of the Apocalypse showed far less concern for lurking theological problems than Alcuin’s questions and answers on Genesis. The function of this text, instead, is catechetical.⁹

THE INCOMPLETE COMMENTARY VS THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL

When comparing Alcuin’s incomplete commentary with the questions and answers manual, the incomplete commentary, drawing mainly from Ambrose Autpert and the questions and answers drawing from Bede, one will find the two vary in fine details on the same passages. Both Bede and Ambrose incorporate into their

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commentaries many of the same sources such as Tychonius, Augustine, Primasius, etc., but their usages of those sources have their own uniqueness articulated by each commentator (Bede and Ambrose). If Alcuin is the sole author of both the commentary and questions and answers manual, then his choice of greater dependence upon Ambrose for the incomplete commentary and Bede for the questions and answers manual may be the result of these works written in different locations and his varying manuscript accessibility at the time,¹⁰ or perhaps he fashioned each work on Revelation based upon the intended readers. But if he was not the author of one, or both for that matter, then the dependence of each requires no speculation. Regardless of the authorship, both of these works on Revelation give interpretations that vary considerably on many details.

LATIN VERSION OF THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL

A Latin version of the manuscript MS; Munich, B.S. Clm 13581, folios 3r-31r is provided in this volume. All the sources used by Alcuin are footnoted as well as scribal corrections. For greater details about the transcription and translations see the translator's preface below.

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NOTES

- 1 See Charles Jacinth Bellairs Gaskoin, *Alcuin: His Life and His Work*, C. J. Clay and sons, 1904 - Alcuin, 735-804, Chapter 8, pgs. 135-136.
- 2 folios 3r-5v and fol. 25r-31r.
- 3 Thomas W. MacKay (By Study and Also by Faith > Early Christian Millenarianist Interpretation of the Two Witnesses in John's Apocalypse) pg. 242; Desert Book Company Salt Lake City, Utah and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies Provo, Utah. 1990
- 4 *Ambrosius Autpertus Expositio in Apocalypsin Libri I-X* Edited by Robert Weber, CCCM 27:27A.
- 5 See Francis X. Gumerlock, Predestination in the century before Gottschalk (Part 2) EQ81.4 (2009) 327.
(http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/2009-4_319.pdf)
- 6 Barbara Nolan, *The Gothic Visionary Perspective*, Princeton University Press, Mar 8, 2015, pg. 8.
- 7 E. Ann Matter, *Alcuin's Questions-and-Answers Text*, pgs. 654-656, *Rivista Di Storia Della Filosofia*, Anno XLV Nuova Serie IV/1990, pg. 654.
- 8 Bede. *Bedae Presbyteri: Expositio Apocalypseos*. Edited by Roger Gryson. CCSL 121A. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001.
- 9 E. Ann Matter, *Alcuin's Questions-and-Answers Text*, pgs. 654-656, *Rivista Di Storia Della Filosofia*, Anno XLV Nuova Serie IV/1990, pg. 656.
- 10 Suggested by Thomas W. MacKay through personal conversation by phone.

FOREWORD OF THE TRANSLATOR

I have translated the first commentary using the edition of the text found in the online *Corpus Corporum* of the University of Zurich (mlat.uzh.ch), as well as the one found in *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio e Vaticanis Codicibus Edita ab A.M., Tomus IX* (1837). The second commentary I have transcribed and translated from images of a manuscript (Munich, *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS Clm 13581* (c.9, *SanktEmmeram, Regensburg*)), the images of which were kindly supplied by Dr. Frank Gumerlock to John Litteral, who transmitted them to me.

For the biblical quotes in my translation, I have most of the time used the 1749-52 Challoner revision of the Douay-Rheims Bible, and sometimes the original 1610 Douay-Rheims, when it happened to match more closely the Latin version I was dealing with. When the Latin was a variant that differed from both, I have myself adapted the translation to make it match the variant. I have also sometimes modified the translation of one word or other when a particular translation, among several possible ones, was more convenient with regards to how the commentator interpreted things.

In the translations of both commentaries as well as in the transcription of the Munich MS, the references to Bible verses have for the most part been added by me, whereas the references to others sources have for the most part been added by John Litteral.

In the transcription, I have kept the original MS spelling, but added modern punctuation and capitalization. I have added notes with emendations wherever there was a scribal error. Wherever I judged that a medieval (mis)spelling might be particularly confusing to a reader who was used

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only to classical spelling, I have added a note too. I have not however done this for every medieval (mis)spelling, but only for those I personally considered the most potentially confusing (especially when a word ending was involved and this could make the word look like another one); I will therefore give here a few indications concerning the variants most frequently found in this text, for those readers who may not be familiar with medieval variants:

- *e* may stand for *ae*, and vice versa. E.g. *rose* = *rosae*; *interpretaetur* = *interpretatur*.

- *i* may stand for *e*. E.g. *discensio* = *descensio*.

- *i* may stand for *y*, and vice versa. E.g. *misticis* = *mysticis*; *Symeon* = *Simeon*.

- *f* may stand for *ph*. E.g. *elefans* = *elephans*.

- Some consonants may be mistakenly doubled. E.g. *repperitur* = *reperitur*.

- Some *h*'s may be mistakenly added, or, on the contrary, be missing. E.g. *Nihilhominus* = *nihilominus*; *exortationis* = *exhortationis*.

- Before *i*, *c* and *t* may be confused. E.g. *preciosis* = *pretiosis*; *Laoditiae* = *Laodiciae*.

I shall add one last thing concerning the manuscript, and it is that it contains... a mystery. The author was writing to a certain « son », and in five places throughout it are found words meaning « my only son » or « my dearest son », but the letters of some of those words have been intentionally mixed up.

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On fol. 4r, one finds *nate niuce* = *nate unice*.

On fol. 8v, *otena kme* = *o nate k[arissi]me*.

On fol. 17r, *te ona ceniu* = *o nate unice*.

On fol. 24v, *tena ceniu* = *nate unice*.

On fol. 29r, *o tena ceniu* = *o nate unice*.

The reason of this I do not know. If the author, or scribes after him, had wanted to conceal he had a son, this does not look like a very effective way of achieving it. Firstly, it would have been simpler either for him not to use the word « son » at all or for scribes to leave it out afterwards; secondly, this « code » is really not difficult to crack; and, lastly, the word « son » is found written normally in some places in the MS, including, in the above examples, the one on fol. 4r, where only the word for « only » has its letters mixed up. Therefore this remains a question I cannot solve. There is each time a horizontal stroke above the words whose letters have been thus mixed up, the exact significance of which I do not know either.

Finally, I would like to thank John Litteral for his work on identifying sources, for providing me with useful material and information throughout the project, and for his editing work; Dr. Frank Gumerlock for providing us with the images of the manuscript; and the members of LatinDiscussion.com who helped me with a few translation issues.

Sarah Van Der Pas

ALCUIN OF YORK

COMMENTARY ON REVELATION

COMMENTARY

BOOK 1

HERE BEGINS ALCUIN'S PREFACE TO THE EXPOSITION OF THE APOCALYPSE

According to blessed Bede,¹ the Apocalypse consists of seven sections. In the first, after a salutation, the author mentions the sufferings and glories of the Lord in order to encourage the weak; then, after mentioning the things that have been done and must be done in the seven churches, he describes the fights and victories of the universal Church. In the second, he sees four beasts, twenty-four ancients, the Lamb standing, and a book sealed with seven seals; he also recounts fights and triumphs of the Church. In the third, under the appearance of seven angels sounding trumpets, he describes various events in the Church. In the fourth, under the symbol of a woman and a dragon, he recounts the fights and victories of the Church, and here he relates the things said and done by the seven angels, although not in the same way as previously. In the fifth, he strikes the earth with seven plagues through the seven angels. In the sixth, he recounts the damnation of the harlot. In the seventh, he says that the wife of the Lamb comes down adorned from heaven. About the seven rules of Tychonius, the first of which is concerning the Lord and his body, the second is concerning the true and simulated body of the Lord, the third is concerning the promises and the law, the fourth is concerning species and genus, the fifth is concerning times, the sixth is recapitulation, the seventh is concerning the Devil and his body, these seven rules are found not only in the Apocalypse but also in other books, though especially in the prophetic ones.

The first one to comment on the Apocalypse was martyr Victorinus. Following him, blessed Jerome, removing some things the former had interpreted literally and adding a few things of his own, composed one book on it, promising that

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working on the Apocalypse would be his priority if he lived long enough; but it is uncertain whether that work was completed. The Donatist Tychonius also published a manifold exposition on it, but he mingled it with the poison of perfidy. After him, Primasius, bishop of the African church, a man in all respects Catholic and learned in the divine Scriptures, explained it in five books, in which, as he himself affirms, he did not so much write his own ideas as those of others, selecting what the same Tychonius had interpreted correctly, but also adding a few chapters exposed by blessed Augustine. Although he explained the Apocalypse more fully than others did, he nonetheless composed his work in a very elevated language. Then, a few chapters (few in number, but treated in a most exquisite manner) were explained by Saint Gregory throughout his various works. Lastly, the blessed priest Ambrose Autpert very beautifully analyzed some of these writings, adding however many things of his own.

HERE ENDS THE PREFACE

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EXPOSITION OF THE PROPHECY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Among all the other books of the New Testament, the Apocalypse is the only one to be called a prophecy, according to this: *Blessed is he that reads and they that hear the words of the prophecy of this book*, [Variant of Rev. 1:3] etc. Therefore, since it is a new prophecy, it surpasses the old prophecy in the same way as the Gospel surpasses the observance of the law, because the things that the old prophecy foretold as needing to be revealed concerning Christ and the Church, this prophecy announces as already revealed. This is also why it is titled “Apocalypse,” that is “Revelation.” Moreover, this book's authority is great, because it was sent to John by the Trinity through an angel: by the Father, as it is said in *which God gave unto him, to make known*; [Rev. 1:1] by the Son, as it is said in *I Jesus have sent my angel, to testify to you*, [Rev. 22:16] and also by the Holy Spirit, as it is said in *the Lord God Omnipotent spirit of the prophets sent his angel*, [Variant of Rev. 22:6]² etc. Then, it is demonstrated that the words of the Apocalypse themselves teach us that nothing in it has a historical³ meaning; for neither are there in heaven smiths to forge breastplates, nor could a woman have given birth in heaven. Now it remains for us to discuss the nature of the vision. So, our fathers taught us that we should understand three kinds of visions: a physical one, as when we see the sun, the moon, and the rest through our eyes; a spiritual one, which happens through ecstasy to men either sleeping or awake, when they behold in spirit not physical things, but likenesses of physical things, as Pharaoh saw the seven cows, [Ref. Gen. 41]

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Nebuchadnezzar the stone cut out of a mountain without hands, [Ref. Dan. 2:34/45] and Peter the linen sheet. [Ref. Acts 10:9 et seq.] The third kind of vision is the one called intellectual, in which it is neither physical things nor likenesses of them that are manifested to the beholders, but the very truth of things; which blessed Jerome ascribes only to this Apocalypse. Saint Augustine,⁴ on the other hand, tells us in every possible way that we must understand in it a spiritual vision exposed to view through likenesses of physical things; but let them see for themselves who of them was closer to the truth. The arrangement of the narration is as follows: sometimes he begins with the Lord's coming and leads us all the way to the end of the world; sometimes he begins with the Lord's coming, and, before ending, he goes back to the beginning and runs over things he had omitted, or things he had already said, repeating them with different symbols, thus until the second coming of the Lord; sometimes he starts with the last persecution, but, before he reaches the end, he recapitulates and joins both narrations together; sometimes he interrupts for a little while the narration undertaken and interposes something else that does not concern it, and after this break in the order he finishes to teach the things he had started to; sometimes, in his very way of speaking, he changes a figure in such a way that he somehow intermingles other things, so that it comes to mean something rather different from what he had started to say. Note moreover that in this revelation both the angel and John very rarely keep their own roles. The speech sometimes reverts from species to genus, as when he added, after rebuking Jezebel specifically, *and I will give to every one of you according to your works*, [Rev. 2:23] which seems to be able to refer

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generally to either the good or the wicked. Likewise, it sometimes passes from genus to species, as when, while he was saying, under the species of the bishop of the Pergamenians, to the church, which lives among wicked people, *I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of Satan is*, [Rev. 2:13] etc., he says right after that against the negligent bishop, *I have against thee a few things*, [Rev. 2:14] etc. From this species it passes to another when he adds immediately after that, *so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaites*: [Rev. 2:15] for as he says not “thou hast there also” but “so hast *thou also*”, he is obviously hinting that he is turning his speech from one species to another. You can also find a genus in a species: for in saying *I John, your brother*, etc., [Rev. 1:9] he proclaims in his own person the persecutions of the whole Church which it suffers every day for the Word of God. It also happens that genus is joined to genus, when a throne is said to be set in heaven: [Ref. Rev. 4:2] for both of these, i.e. both heaven and the throne, mentioned on their own, frequently signify the Church in this revelation, and when they are joined together, they symbolize one and the same Church.

CHAPTER 1

VERSE 1

The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. First, it is to be noted that the meaning would be expressed more fully if he said “*this is the Apocalypse*,” but it is a habit of the Scriptures

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to leave those little words implied for brevity's sake. This is why Solomon did not say “these are the parables of Solomon” [Cf. Prov. 1:1] or “these are the words of Ecclesiastes.” [Cf. Eccles. 1:1] **Apocalypse**, as already said, comes from the Greek for “revelation.” **Jesus** in Hebrew translates to *soter* in Greek and *salutaris*⁵ in Latin. **Christ** comes from the Greek for “anointed”; for *chrisma* means “unction”. It is told in the book of Exodus [Ex. 30:22-25] that Moses was the first to prepare *chrisma* at the Lord's bidding, with which kings and priests used to be anointed, prefiguring Christ invisibly anointed by the Father. **Which God gave unto him, to make known to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass.** Here also it is to be noted that “‘by’ which God gave unto him” would be a more usual way of saying it; but it is a habit of the sacred Scripture frequently to put the accusative instead of the ablative without preposition.⁶ Whence this in a psalm [26:7]: *Hear, O Lord, my voice, which I have cried to thee*, [Variant of Psalm 26:7] and Paul: *I have fought a good fight* [2 Tim. 4:7].⁷ Indeed what is shown by these words is that this revelation is that of Jesus Christ, and that he received from God the task to make known to his servants by his revelation the things which must shortly come to pass. This is why it is necessary to mark it thus: **the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ**, and then to introduce, **which God gave unto him, to make known to his servants**, etc., the former referring to his divinity, according to which he reveals all the mysteries with the Father; the latter referring to his humanity, according to which he received not only from the Father and the Holy Spirit, but also from himself, the task to manifest **to his servants** by his revelation **the things which**

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must shortly come to pass. Whence it is not said, “which God ‘the Father’ gave unto him,” but, indeterminately, **which God**, that is the Trinity, **gave unto him**. Note also that in saying **to his servants**, he also shows the Son in the form of a servant, but not a servant, as his humanity is proclaimed master of the servants. He says **his**, which means “subject to divine grace”, according to this: *I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.* [Lk. 10:21] In what is said afterwards, **the things which must shortly come to pass**, although one could understand countless things by it, his particular intention was nonetheless to speak of the Church's temporal afflictions and everlasting joys to come, and of the wicked's present happiness and future eternal torments. These things all come to pass shortly, because this present time is forced to fly by until the end without a moment's interruption; whence the same John says elsewhere, *little children, it is the last hour.* [1 John 2:18]

And signified, sending by his angel to his servant John. **Signified.** That is “sealed.” For *signum* means “seal,” whence it is also said to Daniel, *clausi sunt signatique sermones*, [Dan. 12:9] and to Isaiah, *signavi visionem in discipulis meis.* [Is. 8:16]⁸ But what does it mean that this vision is said to be sealed, while it is said later, *seal not the words of the prophecy of this book*, [Rev. 22:10] if not that these words are opened for the good, and closed with a seal for the wicked? For it is not because of faithful servants, but because of thieves that riches are sealed. Whence it is said to Daniel [12:10], *the wicked shall deal wickedly, but the learned understand.* [Slight variant of Dan. 12:10]

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Moreover, by saying **signified**, he showed that it should not be taken literally, but by the word signification he made us intent on examining the mysteries more deeply. So this vision was sent through an **angel**; but the unbounded Spirit that sent it was there both in the one through whom he sent it and in the one to whom he sent it. The same angel who appeared wore the figure of the Word incarnate alone and of his body, which is the Church. **John** himself as well, whom he appeared to, presented the symbol of the Church. However, one should not believe that the angel and John prefigured two churches; but when the angel possesses the symbol of the Head, John possesses that of the preachers, and when the angel possesses that of the preachers, John possesses that of the listeners; and when by the angel are represented the members that lead the way, by John are represented those that follow; or in the angel we understand the Church glorified after the resurrection, and in John the present Church needing to be instructed by Christ. Furthermore, one should know that the Lord appears after his Ascension in the same way as he appeared to the fathers before his Incarnation, namely through an angelic creature. By this fact he clearly shows that he must not now be sought physically for teaching, as he is present everywhere in majesty; for we should not think that his humanity taken from the Virgin was present in the angel, but that the angel expressed its figure. It is not at all surprising either that he is called *like to the Son of man*, [Rev. 1:13] when the prophet Daniel is said to have called the angel Gabriel a man. [Dan. 9:21] Moreover, it is said by this angel, *I am the First and the Last*, [Rev. 1:17] etc., just as, before the Incarnation, God said in the person of an angel he had assumed, *I am the God of Abraham*, [Ex. 3:6] etc. Indeed,

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just as Moses calls the one who appeared to him in the bush sometimes “angel,” sometimes “God,” so does John say that this revelation was sent to him through an angel, and affirm that it was the Lord Jesus Christ himself in the mystery and figure. Therefore it was also through an angel that the Lord appeared to Paul on the road, [Acts 9:1-19] because if he had been to appear in the substance of his own flesh, he would appear thus to John, whom he particularly loved. It is also to be noted that John speaks of himself as if of someone else, as others do. Indeed Moses says, *Moses was a man exceeding meek*, [Num. 12:3] and Job, *there was a man in the land of Hus, whose name was Job* [Job 1:1] etc.; for they were not speaking by themselves, but it was the Holy Spirit speaking through them.

VERSE 2

Who hath given testimony to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, what things soever he hath seen. John gave testimony then, and now the Church does, whose symbol he was bearing when he saw this Apocalypse. He makes a distinction between the Word and Jesus Christ because of the two substances of Christ — he who gave testimony to both, saying, *in the beginning was the Word*, [John 1:1] as well as *the Word was made flesh*. [Ibid. 14] **Saw** refers to both: for he saw the Word with his spiritual eyes, and with his physical eyes he saw everything that is told about his humanity.

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VERSE 3

Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the prophecy of this book, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is at hand. Here it is made clear how great this book's authority is, since it is the only one among all prophecies to promise blessedness in return with a promise that is in some way specific. In saying **he that readeth** and **they that hear**, he indicated the persons of the teachers and of the listeners. What is said after that, **and keep those things**, pertains to both, because *not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified*. [Rom. 2:13] Then, in order to stimulate the minds of both to observe those things, he added, **for the time is at hand**; namely the time either for the just to be rewarded after their observance of the commandments or for the unjust to be punished after their negligence of them.

VERSES 4-5

John to the seven churches which are in Asia. By the number **seven** is represented the universal Church, because of the seven gifts of him who has filled the earth. Hence Elisha made the child upon whom he lay gape seven times, [2 Kings 4:32 et seq.] because the people that died from unfaithfulness is brought back to life by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. So the number seven is perfect, being formed by the number three and the number four; for the number three is considered perfect in the divine Scriptures because of the mystery of the Trinity, because of the three virtues: faith, hope, and love, or because of the three

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classes of the faithful: preachers, celibates, and married people. As for the number four, it is perfect because of the four parts of the world, because of the four cardinal virtues (namely prudence, temperance, courage, and justice) or because of the four books of the Gospels. Therefore, because knowledge of the Trinity encompasses the four cardinal points of the sky; because hope, faith, and love complete the sum of the four cardinal virtues; or because the three classes of believers submit to the commandments of the four Gospels, it is right for the universal Church to be symbolized by this number seven. One should nonetheless know that it was especially to the **seven churches** of the Ephesians that he sent these mysteries he wrote in exile. So species is not excluded, but in the species a genus is shown, namely the universal Church. It is appropriate to say that the universal Church is in Asia, for **Asia** translates to “pride.” The word “pride” is not always used to refer to a vice, but sometimes to the summit of virtue, as in *I will make thee to be the pride of worlds*, [Is. 60:15] that is “I will make you despise all pleasures and low honors;” and elsewhere, *He hath lifted thee up above the height of the earth*. [Cf. Is. 58:14]⁹ So it is in this height of pride that the Church takes its place. Alternatively, if “pride” is being used to refer to a vice, we should not take it to mean that the Church will remain proud, but that it was raised in the arrogance of pride some time ago, but is predestined to become humble through a heavenly gift, according to this: *Hast thou entered into the storehouses of the snow, or has thou beheld the treasures of the hail: Which I have prepared for the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war?* [Job 38:22-23]

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Grace be unto you and peace from him that is, and that was, and that is to come, and from the seven spirits which are in the sight of his throne, and from Jesus Christ. **Grace** means forgiveness granted freely,¹⁰ and it is with it shining on us when we were servants of sin that we were adopted as children of justice. It is this grace that Peter and Paul first mentioned in their salutations when they were about to write to the faithful, in order to show, before exhorting the peoples of grace, that the whole sum of the salutation was in this grace. It is proper for grace to be put before **peace**, because no one could have come to God's peace reconciled if the grace of mercy had not preceded them. As for the fact that he says **from him that is, and that was, and that is to come**, it should be taken as referring specifically to the only-begotten Son of God. He is in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and has never been affected by mutability, according to this saying of Paul's: *There was not in him « it is » and « it is not », but « it is » was in him* [2 Cor. 1:19],¹¹ because, before he was born of the Virgin in time, he spent all times with the Father. Whence the same John says, *in the beginning was the Word*. [John 1:1] It is also the same who is to come to judge the living and the dead in the humanity he assumed, as it is written: *He shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven*. [Acts 1:11] So, since it is certain that the Church has received this grace from the Son and the Holy Spirit as well as from the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit, why is the person of the Father not mentioned in this passage? Because it is habitual in the sacred Scriptures, where one or two of the persons of the Trinity are mentioned, for the whole Trinity to be understood at the same time. As for the words **from the seven spirits**, he

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says this because of the sevenfold operation of one spirit; and this spirit is said to be alone in the sight of the throne, that is of the Church, that is in the memory of the saints, because it is to this same spirit in particular that the remission of sins is ascribed, according to this: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.* [John 20:22-23] Or if not, then surely the whole Trinity is understood in the Spirit. In saying **from Jesus Christ**, he mentions the person of the Son again, because the one referred to existed before the ages, and was made man in the end of the ages.

Who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. It is obviously a way of speaking when he calls Christ specifically **the faithful witness**, while *there are three who give testimony: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the three are one God.* [Cf. 1 John 5:7] One may also call the Son specifically, in the role of man he assumed, a **faithful witness**, in that he went as far as the death of the flesh for the sake of the testimony of the truth. For while the whole Church, in the holy preachers, gives testimony concerning Christ, the ones called martyrs, that is “witnesses,”¹² are principally those who suffered physical death for Christ. He is called **first begotten** because no one before him rose never to die. A different interpretation would be that all the saints are dead to the world, as it is said in *for you are dead*, [Col. 3:3] but he is so in a special way, because there has been no sin in him. By **the kings**, he means either all the saints, who know how to govern themselves well, or at any rate the preachers, who become partners with the good but raise themselves above the

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wicked, like Peter above Ananias, [Acts 5:1 et seq.] and Paul who brandishes his scepter, saying, *What will you? shall I come to you with a rod?* [1 Cor. 4:21] **Because he hath loved us.** How he has loved us, the pains he suffered clearly show. He did not however love us as we were, that is wicked ones, but as he made us by love itself. Whence it is added right afterwards, **and washed us from our sins in his own blood;** but in what way he has washed us in his own blood, the apostle indicated, saying, *All we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death.* [Rom. 6:3]

VERSE 6

And hath made our kingdom priests to God and his Father. Because our Head is a king and priest, all the limbs are kings and priests, as the apostle Peter says in *You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood.* [1 Pet. 2:9] They are kings by governing themselves, and priests by offering themselves to God, according to this: *I beseech you therefore by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.* [Rom. 12:1] So, in saying **to God and his Father,** he indicates one person (although, according to the rule mentioned earlier, the Holy Spirit is there understood) in the same way as the apostle also says, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* [2 Cor. 1:3] with the intention that one person should be understood by God and Father; hence it needs to be said, **to him be glory forever and ever:** *to him,* that is to him who **has made us kings and priests,** namely the Father and the Son, in which we understand the love of both, which is the Holy Spirit: *for the love of God is poured forth in our*

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hearts by the Holy Ghost. [Rom. 5:5] Moreover, the Church is right to attribute glory for these things not to itself, but to the one it received them from, according to this: *Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to thy name give glory.* [Ps. 113:9]

VERSE 7

Behold, he cometh with the clouds. If we are to take this literally, when the Lord comes for the judgment, there will be a white cloud overshadowing the saints to protect them from the fire burning the world. This cloud will be frightening, and the reprobates will be terrified by its din. However, hardly anything in this Apocalypse is to be taken literally. So, in the sacred Scripture, when clouds are mentioned in the plural, they represent the holy preachers, who are light by the cleanness of their minds, and keep watering the hearts of their listeners with drops of preaching.

Therefore it is with these clouds that the Lord will come for the judgment, according to this saying of the prophet: *Behold, the Lord comes for the judgment with the ancients of his people.* [Variant of Is. 3:14] **And every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him. Every eye shall see him,** that is, every man shall (the whole is meant by a part) who shall then have been resurrected, either to life or to death — but not the eyes of animals, to which it is not given to rise again after death. Every man shall see him in the form of a servant in which he was judged by the wicked, not in the form of the divinity, which cannot be seen by the wicked. Note also that another translator says, “all the earth shall see him such,” as if he were saying, “such as the wicked did not believe he would be when he

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was here.” **And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of him.** In this place it is to be noted that he says with an addition, **the tribes of the earth**, as if he were saying “those who long for earthly things and devote themselves to greed,” to whom it is said, *Woe to you that are rich*, [Luke 6:24] as well as, *Woe to you that laugh*. [Ibid. 25] As for what the cause of their pain is, it is disclosed with the words **because of him**: for even though there will then be mourning due to many afflictions, it will be nothing compared to the lamentation caused by the sight of Christ's glory; for the unfortunate will then feel more pained by the fact that they have lost such a Lord than by the fact that they have fallen into the most atrocious torment. Now, look: he confirms the things that have been said with the insertion of an oath, when he adds, **Even so. Amen. Amen** is for the Hebrews what **even so** is for us. Both are adverbs of affirmation: therefore he says **Even so. Amen** as if he were saying with duplication, “It is true. It is true.”

VERSE 8

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come. By saying **I am**, he lets us know clearly that God was speaking through him. Whence the Apostle: *Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me?* [2 Cor. 13:3], and David: *Attend, O my people, to my law*, [Ps. 77:1] while neither the people nor the law was David's. **Alpha and Omega** means the same as **the beginning and the end**, for alpha for the Greeks is the beginning of the alphabet, and omega its end. Christ is called the beginning

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because all the creation has got its beginning from him, and he is called the end because he encloses everything like a boundary. Alternatively, he is called **the beginning and the end** because he is God before the ages and a man in the end of the ages; whence John: *In the beginning was the Word*, [John 1:1] as well as: *The Word was made flesh*. [Ibid. 14]

VERSE 9

I John, your brother and your partner in tribulation, and in the kingdom, and patience in Christ Jesus, was in the island, which is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus. In this place John represents both his own person specifically and that of the Church generally. It is also to be noted that **the kingdom** pertains to the Head, **tribulation** to the limbs, and **patience** to both, and all this can be found in **Jesus** alone. Indeed, the Head was suffering tribulation with the limbs when he said, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* [Acts 9:4]. The **kingdom** is in the Head, as in *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*, [Matt. 25:34] which is like saying clearly, “Come, ye limbs, reign with the Head, because I am the kingdom.” For he will grant himself to his people, as it is written: *The oath, which he swore to Abraham our father, that he would grant (himself) to us* [Luke 1:73].¹³ Patience awaits us, according to this: *Knowest thou not, that the benignity of God leadeth thee to patience?* [Variant of Rom. 2:4], and we, in our patience, shall possess our souls. [Cf. Luke 21:19] By **the island of Patmos**, which translates to “strait,”¹⁴ in which John was in exile, are

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represented the persecutions and hardships suffered by John and the Church (that is, a species and a genus) but **for the Word of God**, not for their own bad actions, according to this saying of the apostle Peter: *Let none of you suffer as a thief*, [1 Pet. 4:15] but as a disciple of Christ.

VERSES 10-11

I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. Here we need to start speaking about species and genus individually. John's spirit did not leave his flesh altogether when he saw this, because his body could not have survived without spirit; but, being in ecstasy, he could not feel or understand anything through his body. Note also that he says **he was in the spirit** not on the Sabbath, but on **the Lord's day**, because the old law, which produced death, had already passed, and the new one, which gives life, had become well-known with Christ's Resurrection. Allegorically, the Church is also shown to be the Lord's day,¹⁵ because, in the elect, it mortifies the deeds of the flesh by the spirit [Rom. 8:13] so that it may rise in the spirit in the conduct of a new life. Whence this saying of the apostle: *You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit*. [Ibid. 9]

And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying: What thou seest, write. What one should know is that just as John heard it in the spirit, so was the voice spoken to him spiritual. We should however ask the question of what back a spirit could have to be able to hear a voice behind him. It seems then that the face of that spirit was the very force of divine contemplation, and its back, obliviousness of present matters. Therefore he heard the voice in the things he had forgotten, the purpose of this

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being to make him turn his mind's face towards them and write in a book everything he saw; as if the voice were saying to him, "Those things which you are beginning to see in the spirit of God, either have been done or must be done here, where you hear me sounding without sound, that is on earth." With the words **What thou seest, write**, it is as if he were saying "what thou art about to see," for he had not seen anything yet. Allegorically, the Church hears a voice concerning its union with Christ, behind it, from the law and the prophets, like this: *They shall be two in one flesh*. [Gen. 2:24] This voice, whether with regards to the Church or with regards to John, is rightly called **great**, because it speaks of the highest mysteries, and because of that it is compared to a trumpet and spread by the mouths of the preachers; whence it is said to one of them, *Lift up thy voice like a trumpet*. [Is. 58:1] This voice, through John, tells the Church to write what it sees, that is, to keep it in mind.

And send to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamus, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. We need to say how the interpretations of these names tally with the universal Church. **Ephesus** translates to "my will" or "my counsel": and whose counsel, but that of the one who *casteth away the counsels of princes, but his counsel standeth forever*? [Ps. 32:10-11] Moreover, the Church is the will of God, to which it is said through the prophet, *Thou shalt be called My will*. [Is. 62:4] Note also that will pertains to love, while counsel pertains to correction. Indeed, someone is the will of God when they submit to the Creator not out of fear of punishment, but willingly; whereas if someone wants to join neither for fear

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nor for love, they are given a speech of correction through the action of divine mercy so that they may abandon their error and receive the counsel of salvation. **Smyrna** translates to “their canticle,” that is the elect's, and that canticle is the new commandment. Therefore the Church sings this canticle every day when it fulfills the new commandment by loving God and neighbor. **Pergamus** translates to “separating their horns”: and whose horns but Christ's and the Devil's? So by Christ's horns is represented his kingdom, that is the Church, and by the Devil's horns, it is also his kingdom that is represented, that is the wicked. Hear therefore the separation of the horns: *I will break all the horns of sinners, and the horns of the just shall be exalted.* [Ps. 74:11] **Thyatira** means “enlightened”: and what other enlightened one are we to understand, but the one to whom it is said by Isaiah, *Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem?* [Is. 60:1] It is appropriate for the Church to be called enlightened, so that it should remember that it used to be darkness; whence the apostle to its members: *You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord.* [Eph. 5:8] **Sardis** means “for the prince of beauty,” and “fitted” or “prepared” is implied. The prince of beauty is the one about whom the Psalmist says, *beautiful above the sons of men.* [Ps. 44:3] And who is prepared for him, if not the one about whom the prophet says to the same prince, *The queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety?* [Ibid. 10] **Philadelphia** translates to “saving the inheritance for the Lord.” From this it is right to understand the Church of the elect, which strives to save itself with divine help. Indeed it is about this inheritance that it is said, *I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance.* [Ps. 2:8] **Laodicea** translates to “tribe lovely

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to the Lord” or “they were in vomit”: this interpretation shows the good mingled with the wicked in the Church.

VERSES 12- 13

And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. By saying **to see**, he shows that it was not a physical voice, which cannot be seen, but a spiritual one, with which seeing it is no different from hearing it. Allegorically, the Church turned to see the voice, because it directed its attention, out of the desire of its mind, to the words of the law and of the prophets, so as to see their mysteries now fulfilled. **And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks: and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, one like to the Son of man.** By the **seven candlesticks** is represented the sevenfold Church, in whose midst is Christ, who is called **like to the Son of man** because he was now immortal, or because he appeared not with sin, but in the likeness of the flesh of sin. We read that he appeared in the midst according to this: *Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* [Matt. 18:20] It is appropriate for the Church to be symbolized by seven golden candlesticks, for the sevenfold operation of the Holy Spirit is symbolized by the number, and the brightness of eternal wisdom is symbolized by gold. So just as gold, tried by fire and stretched by blows, is made into a candlestick, so does the Church, melted by the fire of tribulation until purification, and extended into long-suffering by the blows of temptations, reach completion; whence Isaiah says, *The*

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Lord hath said it, whose fire is in Sion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. [Is. 31:9] Furthermore, one should know that one Church is represented by both the **seven candlesticks** and the **Son of man**, because the person of Christ and of the Church is one. So the same Lord who appeared clothed with a garment down to the feet in the midst of the candlesticks, put on as a garment the candlesticks themselves. Therefore, Christ's clothes are the same as the seven candlesticks, that is the Church. Indeed genus is joined to genus, when the Church is meant by both the seven candlesticks and the Son of man. Note also that **the likeness to the Son of man** concerns us, because just as our Head has risen again in deed, so have we in hope.

Clothed with a garment down to the feet (a *poderes*).¹⁶ *Podes* means “feet” in Greek. What do we understand by the *poderes*, that is a tunic reaching the ankles, which Zechariah says is a priestly garment, [Probable reference to Zec. 3:4 LXX]¹⁷ if not the flesh of Christ specifically, and the whole Church generally? Indeed, by offering himself on the cross to God the Father, he carried out a priesthood. Now, this priestly garment is down to the ankles because his body, which is the Church, down to its very last members, fills up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ; [Cf. Col. 1:24] or if not, then certainly his garment down to the ankles was his work of love to the suffering of death. **And girt about the paps with a golden girdle.** What one should know is that Daniel saw a man girt about the loins [Dan. 10:5] and John saw him **girt about the paps** because the Old Testament restrains the lust of the flesh, whereas the New restrains also that of the mind. However, that double girding does not refer to the Head,

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but to the limbs, since it is certain that our Redeemer has been touched by neither the lust of the body nor that of the heart. So it is fitting to say that this girdle was golden, because whoever is a citizen of the heavenly fatherland, forsakes uncleanness, not out of fear of punishment, but out of love for heavenly brightness. The order given to the apostles in the New Testament, *Let your loins be girt*, [Luke 12:35] is given, through their persons, to those who, not yet restraining the fornication of the flesh, belong to the man of the old life; for the apostles themselves had already forsaken the uncleanness of the flesh. Alternatively, the angel is **girt about the paps with a golden girdle** because the Church, coming from two peoples, is united in Christ by the bond of love.

VERSE 14

And his head and his hairs were white, as white wool, and as snow. Christ's **head** is God the Father; whence the apostle: *The head of Christ is God*; [1 Cor. 11:3] whose eternity is represented, according to the habit of human speech, by the whiteness of the head. Allegorically, the head of the Church is its Redeemer, according to this: *The head of man is Christ*. [Ibid.] The **hairs** are the most excellent people in the Church, who are compared to lambs, that is to **wool**, because of their innocence, and to **snow** because of the resurrection. Because Christ has shown both in himself (i.e. innocence and resurrection, the former of which we are ordered to imitate, the latter of which we are ordered to expect) not only the hairs, but also the whole head is assimilated to white wool and snow.

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And his eyes were as a flame of fire. These **eyes** are those concerning which it is said later, *I saw a Lamb as it were slain, having seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God*; [Rev. 5:6] for since the Holy Spirit both enlightens the Church to faith and burns it to the love of God, it is right for him to be assimilated to the lights of **eyes** and to a **flame of fire**. These **eyes** may also represent spiritual angels in the Church who enlighten the same Church with the light of knowledge and provide the fire of love.

VERSE 15

And his feet like unto fine brass, as in a burning furnace. The fabrication of **fine brass** is said to be as follows: copper is thrown into a furnace, a violent fire is applied to it, a certain medicine is also thrown into it all, and the copper as a result both gains a greater solidity and turns into the brightness of gold: whence it is appropriate for the **feet like unto fine brass** to refer to those last members of the Church that are to be melted by an intense fire of tribulation under the Antichrist, but will be found to be stronger and brighter after using the medicine of endurance. Because the trouble will be even more severe in Judea, where the Lord was crucified by the wicked Jews, another translation has “fine brass of Lebanon,” which is said to be a mountain in Judea. **And his voice as the voice of many waters.** Above, he compared the voice of the one who appeared to a trumpet, and now he compares it to **the voice of many waters**, because what was first proclaimed by a few preachers, was afterwards proclaimed by the whole world. Alternatively, we could understand, by **the voice of the trumpet**, the voice of the Old and of the New

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Testament, and by **the voice of many waters**, love, whose law is manifold, as it is said in *and thou shalt know that his law is manifold*. [Cf. Job 11:6]

VERSE 16

And he had in his right hand seven stars. By the **seven stars**, as the same angel explains below, angels are meant; not however those spirits of the heavenly fatherland, in whom nothing reprehensible can be found, but preachers of the Church, about whom it is said, *The angels of peace shall weep bitterly*. [Is. 33:7] It is right for these to be represented by stars and angels, because they both shine in the night of this world by the cleanness of their lives, and prove to be angels of truth by announcing heavenly things to their listeners. Because they are seven not truly in number, but in the signification of totality, this species includes all the preachers of the Church. Whence in signification there are no longer seven angels, but one, that is the perfected order of preachers, just as the seven candlesticks represent not only the churches of Asia, but the universal Church; and if we pay subtle attention, we also find the candlesticks in these **seven stars**, that is, the universal Church in the holy preachers. Whence, when the Lord speaks to one angel, he says in the end: *Let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches*. [Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22] The **right hand** in this passage should be understood to mean the utmost blessedness, which now is there in hope, and will then be there in fact; whence this saying of Isaiah: *The right hand of my just one will uphold*

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thee. [Variant of Is. 41:10] Then, when we hear that the Church is held in the **right hand**, from the whole we must understand a part, which must be placed on the right hand in the future. **And from his mouth came out a sharp two-edged sword**. What is symbolized by the **sword** but the preaching of the Old and of the New Testament? As in this saying of Paul's: *and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. [Eph. 6:17] It is right for it to be called **two-edged**, because it cuts off faults committed in deed on one side, and forbidden thoughts on the other; or because it informs imperfect people on the outside according to the literal meaning, and instructs perfect people on the inside according to the mystical meaning. **And his face was as the sun shineth in his power**. By the **face** shining **as the sun**, we may understand the elect, as in *The just shall shine as the sun*. [Matt. 13:43] If we wish to understand **the sun** mentioned in this sentence to mean the visible sun, we should know that it will then be of a greater brightness than it now is, and the glory of the saints will then be greater, as Isaiah attests, who says, *The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days: in the day when the Lord shall bind up the wound of his people*; [Is. 30:26] whence in this passage it is added **in his power**. Alternatively: what is symbolized by the face of the angel but the Redeemer's manifest incarnation, which had, as it were, a rising in being born, a setting in dying, and again a rising in being resurrected? And since his resurrection had already become well-known throughout the world, it is as if the sun had gone up to the hours around midday when John was seeing these things, and this is why he said, with those words added, **as the sun shineth in his power**.

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VERSES 17-18

And when I had seen him, I fell at his feet as dead. In this passage John signifies Christ's limbs, and the angel signifies Christ specifically. Therefore John falls **as dead** at the angel's feet because the Church follows Christ's footprints to die to the world. It is appropriate to say that he is **as dead**, because even if the Church dies to the world and to vices, it still lives to God. **And he laid his right hand upon me, saying: Fear not.** The **right hand** of the angel in this place represents the preachers. Hence it is said by Moses, *In his right hand a fiery law*, [Deut. 33:2] that is, in the holy preachers the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It is not mentioned at all what the angel did with his hand laid upon him, but we deduce with a certain reasoning that he lifted up from the ground either John or the Church in him. Now, can it be that the Church was put away from the imitation of the sufferings of Christ? No. Therefore the angel laying his hand upon John who lay **at his feet as dead** and raising him from the ground, is the Redeemer Lord lifting up the Church which imitates his sufferings from sorrow of the heart to the hope of future glory by encouraging it through the holy preachers, as in *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us*. [Rom. 8:18] He fittingly says **Fear not**, as if the Lord were saying to the Church, "Receive confidence from above, and drive human fear away." **I am the First and the Last, and I was alive, and dead, and behold I am living for ever and ever.** Here it is made clear that this angel specifically bore the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom all this corresponds to. **And have the keys of death and of hell.** By the keys is

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represented the divine judgment's power, which no one can escape, but it shuts everyone in like a key, according to this: *He shutteth, and no man openeth*; [Rev. 3:7] by **death** is meant the one about whom it is written, *By the envy of the devil, death came into the world*; [Wis. 2:24] and by **hell** are represented those who belong to him. So with the latter set of **keys** the Devil is released to tempt the Church, and with the former he is bound; whence it is written, God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able. [1 Cor. 10:13]

VERSE 19

Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, and which are, and which must be done hereafter. It passes from genus to species, for here John represents the preachers specifically. Note also that he repeats things he had already said, so that the fault of sluggishness should be put away. **Write therefore**, he says, **the things which thou hast seen**, as if he were saying “the things foretold concerning me in the law and the prophets,” “and which are — namely the things fulfilled by me — and which must be done hereafter — that is the things that are to be fulfilled among my limbs.” But we should now close this book in its due end, so that we not get tired in the flat of plains before we come to climb the mountains of this Apocalypse.

HERE ENDS THE FIRST BOOK

HERE BEGINS THE SECOND BOOK

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As we have already said in the previous book, some affirm that this vision is a spiritual one, while others affirm it is an intellectual one. If it is an intellectual one, it is not in his own person, but in that of others that he learns. If, on the other hand, it is a spiritual one, he says in some places how he received understanding of the vision, and keeps silent about it in other places. This he of course does with the right moderation, because if the vision were made altogether clear, it would lose its worth, and if it remained completely obscure, it would be despised.

VERSE 20

The mystery of the seven stars, which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. And the seven candlesticks are the seven churches. Enough has already been said about this.

NOTES

- (1) [Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, EPISTOLA AD EUSEBIUM, PL 93]
- (2) Variant of Rev. 22:6. The Latin of the here-found variant could also be interpreted as « the Lord God Omnipotent of the spirit of the prophets... »
- (3) As opposed to mystical, spiritual, allegorical.
- (4) Literal Interpretation of Genesis, Book 12.
- (5) *Soter* = saviour; *salutaris* = salutary.
- (6) This is about the grammatical construction of the Latin. The accusative is the form of a word (noun, pronoun, or adjective) used for the direct object (or internal object, but I will not enter into too much detail for this is not supposed to be a grammar book!) of a verb, as *quam*, « which », is the direct object of *dedit*, « gave », *in quam dedit illi Deus palam facere servis suis, quae oportet fieri cito*, « which God gave unto him, to make known to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. » The ablative without preposition is used, among other things, to denote an instrument or means by which something is done, as *qua*, « with which/by (means of) which », in the phrasing the author

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suggests would have been more usual: *qua dedit illi Deus*, « with which/by (means of) which God gave unto him ». The author was interpreting the Apocalypse as a means by which God gave unto Jesus to make known to his servants the things that must shortly come to pass, rather than as something God gave unto him in order to make those things known, and so thought the ablative would have been more usual to express the idea. His interpretation seems however erroneous.

(7) 2 Tim. 4:7. Latin could have used the ablative here, so as to say literally something to the effect of « I have fought in/by a good fight », but the accusative is not exceptional either.

(8) Dan. 12:9: « The words are shut up, and sealed. » The Isaiah quote means « I have sealed the vision among my disciples », which seems to be a variant of Is. 8:16. *Signum* means a sign, an ensign, or the image on a signet ring, and hence a seal. The verb *signare*, which derives from *signum*, means « to mark », « to designate », or « to seal », and it is the past participle of this verb (*signati*) that is used in the Daniel passage, and another form of the verb (*signavi*) in the Isaiah variant. The verb *significare*, used in the Revelation verse discussed here, and also derived from the noun *signum*, means « to signify », but is here interpreted by the commentator as having a different meaning beside the usual one.

(9) Cf. Is. 58:14. Note that one of the Latin words for « pride » (the one used in the Latin text in « Asia » translates to « pride ». The word « pride »... »), *elatio*, also means « elevation » and derives from the verb used in the Latin in « he hath lifted thee up ». The word used for « pride » in the Isaiah quote is a different one.

(10) « Freely » = *gratis*, which is nothing else but the ablative plural of *gratia*, which means, among other things, « gratitude », « grace », and, in the plural, « thanks ». Hence *gratis* means literally « for thanks (and nothing more) ».

(11) Variant of 2 Cor. 1:19. There would actually be no difference in Latin between « it is » and « he is ».

(12) The word « martyr » comes from Greek, where it means « witness ».

(13) Luke 1:73. This quote in the Latin contains an ambiguity that makes so that its last words could be understood as « that he would grant to us » as well as « that he would grant himself to us », although the former is a more likely interpretation.

(14) Or « heat » or « violence ». These are the principal possible translations for the Latin word used here. The actual etymology of the name « Patmos » itself seems to be very uncertain.

(15) « The Church is also shown to be the Lord's day » is a conjecture on my part. The Latin in this place does not make much sense to me and may be corrupt.

(16) « A garment down to the feet » renders Latin *poderes*, a word of Greek origin.

(17) Probable reference to Zec. 3:4 LXX (the standard Vulgate and the Douay-Rheims lack the reference to the « *poderes* »).

COMMENTARY

CHAPTER 2

VERSES 1-2

And unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he, who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience. In this place, blessed John, either in his own person or in that of preceding preachers, writes the Lord's words at the latter's bidding to the universal Church, which is represented by the **angel**. In this angel, sometimes the whole body of the elect, which consists of holy preachers and good listeners, is extolled by the proclamation of its merits, sometimes a part in particular is censured as wicked. So, what does it mean that the Redeemer Lord holds **stars in his right hand**, if not that he has predestined his elect to the blessedness of success? What does it mean that the same walks **in the midst of the candlesticks**, if not that he is present everywhere by bestowing the grace of gifts on every one of the saints through his inward discernment? If by the **stars** and **candlesticks** we understand the whole body of the Church, which consists of the elect and of the reprobates, by the **right hand** of Christ we should understand the power of his divinity, which no one can escape, *for in his hand are all the ends of the earth*; [Ps. 94:4] and he walks among the candlesticks, visiting the just and forsaking the unjust. The Lord says he knows the **works, labor, and patience** of the saints, which means that he approves them by the grace of choosing. But then the speech turns back to a specific weak

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part of the body when it is said after that, **and how thou canst not bear them that are evil**: for it is not a sign of merit, but of great weakness, that the angel cannot bear them that are evil. It is also to be noted that he says below to the same angel, *Thou hast endured for my name*: [Rev. 2:3] which is not incompatible with this passage, because in the one is indicated the weakness of some limbs, and in the other the strength of others. **And thou hast tried them, who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars**. It is to be believed that false apostles had then spread in the Church of Ephesus, whom the same John calls *Antichrists* in his epistle, [1 John 2:18] and in whose persons is denoted the perfidy of all heretics. As for trying, it is sometimes done with a view to approbation, as in *The Lord your God trieth you*. [Deut. 13:3] So the Church tries the false ones when, through the preachers, it interrogates the heretics about faith, to see whether they are disciples of the truth or of falsehood.

VERSE 3

And thou hast patience, and hast endured for my name, and hast not fainted. As this is obvious, let us pass over it.

VERSES 4-5

But I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works.

Let us not believe that the one who has left his first charity is the one he honored with such great praise in the previous verse; but from this species he turns his speech towards

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another, which he judges worthy of reprimand. By the **first charity**, he means that of earlier times, using a human way of speaking. **Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance.** What does it mean to say to an unrepentant man, **I come to thee**, if not “I will make thee feel the presence of my wrath?” And since the angel and the candlestick are one in signification, what does it mean to say **I will move thy candlestick out of its place**, if not “I will move thee?” Here we must understand not the whole angel, but the unrepentant part of him, and its place is the Church; for since he is dealing not with genus but with species in the angel, he shows the place of the species in the genus. It is also to be noted that he does not say “I will throw away,” but **I will move**, showing that an unrepentant person is by no means totally torn away from the Church as long as they are in this life, but that, because of their unrepentant heart, they do not deserve the gift of holiness by which they shone before human eyes. The Lord is said to move a candlestick (that is, not to set it up) in the same way as he is said to harden Pharaoh's heart. [Ex. 4:21; 7:3, 13, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8] So when someone commits a fault, then their candlestick is moved in the sight of men; but if they quickly stand up through penitence, it is mercifully put back in the same place; and that is why many are standing in the sight of God, who in the sight of men seem to be lying down. Therefore he says, **I will quickly move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance**, that is “Thou shalt not get the gift of holiness back after thy fall, except thou take care to soften thy heart to penance.”

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VERSE 6

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaites, which I also hate. As if the universal angel were told, “Not in the species that I have just frightened, but in another one, thou hast this, **that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaites, which I also hate.**” As for what the specific **deeds of the Nicolaites** are, blessed Augustine explained it in his book on heresies,¹ saying: “Nicolas, according to the story, was one of the seven deacons who were ordained by the apostles. [Cf. Acts 6] As he was censured for jealousy towards his wife, who was very beautiful, he is said, in order to exculpate himself, to have given permission for anyone who so wished to use her. This deed of his gave rise to a most shameful sect, which has as a principle the promiscuous use of women. Its followers also do not even keep their food free of things sacrificed to idols.” Moreover, all the heretics generally, are **Nicolaites**: indeed “Nicolas” translates to “foolish people.” Therefore all those who do not hold the right views concerning the Father's wisdom, which is the Son, even if they are wise for the world, show that they are fools for God. We find **Nicolaites** even in the Church: namely those we see foolishly amassing treasure in their love for the world. Finally, it is to be noted that he does not say “Thou hatest the Nicolaites,” but **the deeds of the Nicolaites**, because it is demonstrated that the Lord and those who are on his side do not hate in them the nature, which was created good in them, but their execrable deeds.

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VERSE 7

He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. By saying this, he clearly shows that in the one church of the Ephesians, he includes the totality of believers. He is not after the ears of the body, but after those of the heart, according to this: *I say to you that hear.* [Luke 6:27] Now, since the angel bore the person of the Son specifically, what does it mean that it is not said “what the Son of God” but **what the Spirit saith to the churches**, if not that, to instruct human manners, the words of the Son are the words of the Spirit? Or, alternatively, we should understand in the Spirit not the person of the Holy Spirit specifically, but the whole Trinity. **To him, that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God.** The tree of life is the wisdom of God the Father, according to this saying of Solomon's: *Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom, a tree of life*, etc. [Prov. 3:13-18] It is fitting for it to be called a **tree of life**, because in the present it protects its elect from the heat of vices, and in the future blessedness it will provide those who desire wisdom with the food of eternal contemplation; whence this: *I shall be filled when thy glory shall appear to me.* [Variant of Ps. 16:15] So **to him who overcomes**, that is to him who, in Christ and through Christ, prevails over the temptations of the old enemy, Christ will, according to his humanity, **give to eat of the tree of life**, because, when he comes for the judgment, he will bring him to contemplate the majesty of his divinity. As for **the paradise the tree of life** is in, it is eternal life, which is in **the tree of life**. Note also that he says he has a **God** as he speaks according to his humanity which he assumed for us.

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Furthermore, the fact that he both partly praises and partly blames this angel, is in accordance with the latter's name: for "Ephesus" means both "great fall" and "my will."

VERSES 8-9

And to the angel of the church of Smyrna write: These things saith the First and the Last, who was dead, and is alive: I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich. This is not only said to one, but rather to the union of saints, whose **tribulation** is manifold; whence another translation has "tribulations" in the plural. As for **poverty**, we should understand two kinds of it: for there is one poverty in renouncing earthly things, and another in the contrition of the spirit, by which pride is decreased and humility increased; which is the one about which the Lord says, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*; [Matt. 5:3] for the one who is poor in spirit is the one who, when he does good things, always notes that he is useless. Therefore with the words, **I know thy poverty, but thou art rich**, it is as if he were saying, "By the very fact that thou, by humility of spirit, considerest thyself poor, thou art proven to be rich in all respects." With the words **I know**, it is as if it were said "I make thee know." Any one of the elect may also be called **poor** and **rich** because he does not yet have in fact the riches of the heavenly fatherland, while he possesses them in hope. **And thou art blasphemed by them that say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.** This is said to the universal Church, which is blasphemed by its enemies in its individual limbs throughout various places, and in its whole body throughout the world. For it is not to be believed that there

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were or are blaspheming Jews only in Smyrna. We should however ask the question of when the Jews lost their own name, since the sacred Scripture calls them so even after the murder of the Redeemer, as in the Acts of Apostles; but one should know that, while they falsely display this name literally on the outside, they lost it in spirit on the inside when they refused to confess Christ. Indeed, “Jew” translates to “confessor.” Symbolically, these things correspond to the heretics, who falsely take possession of the name of “Jews,” that is “confessing one.”

VERSE 10

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. According to this saying of the Gospel: *Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul.* [Matt. 10:28] **Behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison that you may be tried: and you shall have tribulation ten days.** Here it is clearly shown that he is addressing several people in one angel: for while he first said **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer** in the singular, he said **some of you** in the plural, as well as **that you may be tried**; but he did not say either “that they may be tried” or “they shall have,” but **that you may be tried** and **you shall have**: he did so in order to let us know by saying this that many are standing together in one. So it is all the straits of oppressions that he indicated by the name of prison. When he says not “you” but **some of you**, he wants us to understand by this those who emerge victorious from the tribulations inflicted on them. Now what does it mean that he confines the **tribulation** of the Church to a number of **ten days**, if not that the Church is doing battle

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against the various sufferings of persecutions and diverse enticements of desires while submitting to the commandments of the Decalogue? **Be thou faithful until death: and I will give thee the crown of life.** This is said to the whole Church generally, and to every one of the faithful specifically. Hence the Lord in the Gospel: *He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.* [Ibid. 22]

VERSE 11

He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: He that shall overcome, shall not be hurt by the second death. When the sacred Scripture usually mentions three deaths, namely one of sin, one of the flesh, and one of damnation, why is the last damnation in this passage not called the third, but the **second death**, if not because it seems that here are mentioned only the deaths that are demonstrated to harm? Namely the death of sin and the death of eternal punishment, compared to which that of the flesh is not worthy to be called death. By the word hurting, we should understand decay in afflictions.

VERSE 12

And to the angel of the church of Pergamus write: These things, saith he, that hath the sharp two-edged sword. This was explained earlier.

VERSE 13

I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of Satan is. This is said to the Church generally, which dwells

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throughout the whole world, in which the Devil reigns. **And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith. Even in those days Antipas my faithful witness, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.** This sentence either was corrupted by scribes' fault, or it must be explained by some words being left implied, so that the order of words should be the following: "In those days, Antipas my faithful witness, who was slain among you, did not deny my faith;" or if not, then certainly "In those days there was Antipas my witness, who was slain among you." In this martyr, it is all witnesses that are praised by the proclamation of their merits. He says **among you** not because he was slain by them, but among them by those in whom Satan dwells. Note also that first comes **thou holdest** in the singular, and then comes **you** in the plural, because he is addressing several in one person.

VERSE 14

But I have against thee a few things: thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat, and to commit fornication. These things do not at all correspond to the one to whom he had previously said, "*Thou holdest fast my name*", etc.; but the speech turns towards another species. What he calls the doctrine of Balaam is the advice he gave Balac to put very beautiful women before the children of Israel so that, delighted by their looks, they might rush into forbidden embraces; enticed by their flatteries, they might eat of Beelphegor's sacrifices; and because of this be forsaken by God and fall before their enemies. [Num. 31:16] Now if we turn from

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the literal meaning to the symbol, we find how things happened afterwards or are still to happen. **Balaam** indeed translates to “varying people;” whence it suitably indicates the heretics, who are weakened by their divergent errors. As for **Balac**, it translates to “knocking out”, and by him are represented the powers of this world, which (most of the time on the advice of heretics) bring the dignity of the Church down for a time. By **Israel**, “man seeing the Lord God,” are symbolized the elect. So, on Balaam's advice, **Balac** casts before **the children of Israel** the **stumbling block** (that is the deception) of women so that they should eat of things sacrificed to idols and fornicate with them, because, on the heretics' advice, the princes of this world present in their discourses on the outside the sects of the heretics as if they were beautiful, while we know that they are full of all filth inside. Alternatively, **Balaam**, that is the Devil, teaches **Balac**, that is the flesh, to cast women, that is pleasures of the world, for souls to perish from.

VERSES 15-16

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaites. Enough has already been said concerning the deeds **of the Nicolaites**. When he says not “thou hast there” but **so hast *thou also***, he shows that the speech is turning from one species to another. Now since it makes no difference whether one is convicted of tolerating in silence the doctrine of Balaam or that of the **Nicolaites**, it is suitably said after that, **In like manner do penance.** With these words are also secretly invited to **penance** those whom the same sluggish preachers are reprimanded for having completely failed to correct; whence it is also said

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after that, **If not, I come to thee, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.** Why indeed does he not say “I will fight against thee” but **I will fight against them**, if not because, as already said, he is exhorting to come to lamentation of their faults also those who he knew had perished because of the sluggishness of the preachers? Which is the same as if he said, “I come to thee, and will fight against thee,” as another translation shows, or “I come to you all, and will fight against you.” Now what does it mean to say **I come to thee**, if not “I make thee feel consideration for my wrath?” Or what does it mean to say **I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth**, if not “I will damn them with the sharp sentences of my words?”

VERSE 17

He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna. By **the hidden manna** he means the invisible bread that came down from heaven and was made man so that man might eat the bread of angels. [Cf. John 6:51; Ps. 77:24-25] This manna is now consumed in the sacrament by faith, and will someday be consumed in reality by sight, according to this saying of the Psalmist: *I shall be filled when thy glory shall appear to me.* [Variant of Ps. 16:15] Indeed if we translate **manna**, it means “What is this?”, which we say only of a thing we have not seen before. Therefore it is appropriate for that satiety of heavenly glory to be called **manna**, because, according to Paul's words, *neither hath eye seen, nor hath it entered into*

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the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him. [Part of 1 Cor. 2:9]

And will give him a white counter, and in the counter, a new name, which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it. The **counter** is a precious stone which is also called carbuncle, because this stone is said to do the same as a kindled piece of coal,² which shines in the darkness with the size in which it stopped. Therefore, what is indicated by the **white counter** but Jesus Christ, who appeared clean among men without any dark stain of sin, and illuminated the darkness of our mortality with the light of his divinity? The meaning is: I will make the one who triumphs over the author of death my coheir in the Father's kingdom. Another translation has “pearl” instead of **counter**. The new name he is talking about is “Christian,” which was previously unheard of, concerning which the Lord says through Isaiah to the Church, *Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.* [Variant of Is. 62:2] Yet, since many who have been overcome by the Devil are called by this name, how is it that he promises to give it only to those who overcome, if not because the gift we must understand here is the one by which we know those who are predestined to life in the heavenly city have been chosen? Here it is suitably said after that, **which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it**, as if he were saying, “No one defends the dignity of the Christian name by their life and manners but the one who has gained it through divine predestination to eternal life.” For knowing the name of Christ is about keeping the commandments, while receiving it is traced back to the grace of divine predestination.

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VERSES 18-19

And to the angel of the church of Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like to a flame of fire, and his feet like to fine brass. I know thy works, and thy faith, and thy charity, and thy ministry, and thy patience, and thy last works which are more than the former. This is said to the universal Church, whose **works, charity, and faith** the Lord knows because he approves them by the grace of choosing. However, these things are mentioned out of order: for you first need to believe, then to love what you believe, and lastly to do the works love and belief force you to. By **ministry** in this passage he wants us to understand ample almsgiving in extreme poverty. We should however ask the question of why the **last works** of the Church are declared to be **more than the former**. So, one should know that at first, the Gentiles converted to Christ were ordered by the apostles to keep only four laws: namely to abstain from things sacrificed, fornication, meat of animals killed by suffocation, and blood; [Cf. Acts 15:19-20] but after a little time had passed, they attained the summit of perfection, so that many of the believers disregarded all things of the world. Either this is the explanation, or it is because starting from the persecution of the Antichrist a greater virtue of works will shine in the Church. Indeed, while the Church made up of Gentiles is now working alone, it will then also bring the Jews to faith, and thus work twice as much.

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VERSE 20

But I have somewhat against thee: because thou sufferest the woman Jezabel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach, and to seduce my servants, to commit fornication, and to eat of things sacrificed to idols. These things do not correspond to the one he honored with such great praise above, but they refer specifically to the bad preachers who allow fornication and idolatry in the Church by their negligence. It is not to be believed that **Jezabel** the wife of Ahab, who we know was crushed by the hoofs of horses, [2 Kings 9:33] physically survived until that time; but since there were then in that church some people who imitated her sexual intercourses, the very mother of fornications was censured in them: for the reprobates, united in an equality of vices, constitute one body, which is that of the old enemy, just as the elect, by the bond of virtues, make up one body, which is that of Christ. Jezebel's **fornication** is of four kinds: there is fornication in pleasure, as in *Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart*; [Matt. 5:28] there is also **fornication** in deed, whence the apostle: *Fly fornication, brethren*; [Variant of 1 Cor. 6:18] there is the **fornication** of idolatry, according to this: *She played the harlot with stones and with stocks*; [Jer. 3:9] and there is also the **fornication** of covetousness, according to this: *covetousness, which is the service of idols*. [Col. 3:5] It is also to be noted that **Jezabel calls herself a prophetess**, and seduces God's **servants** because of that. So, when anyone says to a celibate, “Come, let us enjoy what we desire, because if God did not wish this to happen, he would not have created man and

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woman,” they are seeking to seduce a soldier of God as though by prophesying. So, **Jezabel** translates to “flow of blood,” “flowing,” or “dunghill.” By the name of blood are symbolized sins, according to this: *Deliver me from bloods*. [Ps. 50:16] It is said that what happens to women when they suffer their flow of blood is that humor of blood collected during several days overflows and is discharged when the menstrual time has come. It is demonstrated that it is what happens to the universal Jezabel: a shameful pleasure accumulated during a long time springs forth to open ugliness of works when the time has come. Then the mind grows excessively anxious, and the man melts just like wax in front of fire; whence it is right for her to be called “flowing.” Finally, by the very repetition of the perpetration of lust, a stench of bad reputation is emitted far and wide, whence it is fittingly that **Jezabel** translates to “dunghill.”

VERSE 21

And I gave her a time that she might do penance, and she will not repent of her fornication. Hence it is said by blessed Job concerning any reprobate, *The Lord hath given him place for penance, and he abuseth it unto pride*. [Variant of Job 24:23] Now, since in the previous verse he blamed the sluggish preacher for Jezabel's fornication, why is it not said, “I gave you and her,” but only **her**? Especially since the apostle affirms that not only those who do evil, but also those who consent to those who do it, must be punished with eternal death. [Rom. 1:32] One should know therefore that God's speech is passing from species to genus, and it is as if in it he covertly blamed as unrepentant

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the reprobate part of the species that he had overtly reproved above, so that one and the same species appears now guilty, now worthy, when it is blamed both overtly as negligent and non-overtly as unrepentant. He did this in order that the part of the species that consists of holy preachers should not seem to be joined to the one that is part of the reprobates.

VERSES 22, 23, and 24

Behold, I put her into a bed: and they that commit adultery with her shall be in very great tribulation, except they do penance from their deeds. And I will kill her children unto death. Jezabel, those who fornicate in her, and **her children** are one body, that of Satan, which is put in **a bed** not in order that it may rest, but that it may run into madness: for by the name of **bed** are meant the audacity and feeling of security to commit wrongs. She is said to be **put** in it by God not because he himself impels her, but because he does not snatch her away from this illusion of security by punishing her; and since increases of vices are like some kinds of torments, it is right for the **bed** to be called a **great tribulation**. The **bed** may also indicate eternal torment; it seems to me this is why another translator put “mourning” instead of **bed**.³ **And the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts.** By **the reins** he wants us to understand the very perpetrated wickedness of physical lust, because the seed of human conception comes from the loins of men. By the word **hearts** he wants us to understand incitements to spiritual adultery. Whence the Psalmist: *Burn my reins and my heart*. [Ps. 25:2] But can it be that before the Lord

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publicly unmasks idolaters and fornicators and massacres them, the Church does not know that he is the Knower of secrets? Or how can it be called Church, if it gets to know it by this outcome of events rather than by faith? We should therefore hold the firm belief that, as far as the present state of things is concerned, they are punished with a hidden death, so that the meaning should be the following: When I condemn the reprobates hiddenly and secretly, even then the faithful do not doubt that I know the actions of everyone. **And I will give to every one of you according to his works.** He comes back from species to genus. There is nothing more to be explained here, but there is more to be feared. **To you I say, to the rest who are at Thyatira: Whosoever have not this doctrine, and who have not known the depth of Satan.** In this passage the discourse returns to the elect. By the **depth of Satan** we should understand his ruinous pride, because of which he was the first to carry himself high and swell with vanity against God. The elect are said not to know this pride, that is, not to agree to take it as an example to imitate; in the same way as the sacred Scripture says that unmarried women have not known men, which means that they have no experience whatsoever of the actions of men in sexual acts, and in the same way as we say that a truthful person knows nothing about lying. **As they say, I will not put upon you any other burthen.** Who are those who say this but the peoples of the Jews, who say that the observances of the old law are being put on the shoulders of believers? Whence Luke the evangelist: *Some coming down from Judea, taught the brethren: That except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.* [Acts 15:1]

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VERSE 25

Yet that, which you have, hold fast till I come. That is, do not give up the light burden that you are called to, namely the grace of the Redeemer. By saying **till I come**, he shows that the Church remains under grace until the times of the renewal.

VERSES 26, 27, and 28

And he that shall overcome, and keep my works unto the end, I will give him power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessel of a potter they shall be broken, as I also have received of my Father. The Son did not receive this power from the **Father** in his divinity, but in his humanity, in which he is inferior to the **Father**; whence this: *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth*; [Matt. 28:18] and since the elect are his limbs, they also receive this power in their Head, according to this: *Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven*, etc. [Matt. 18:18] By the **rod of iron** is represented the authority of preachers; for a **rod of iron** has straightness without weakness: so are the holy preachers capable neither of sparing themselves nor others when it comes to fighting vices, but they only strive to build the path of justice in themselves and others; whence it is said to Christ: *The rod of thy kingdom is a straight rod*. [Variant of Ps. 44:7] It is appropriate for believers to be compared to earthen **vessels**, for they are vessels in that they bear the treasure hidden from eternity, and they are earthen because they are burdened by the decay of the flesh; whence the apostle: *We have this*

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treasure in earthen vessels. [2 Cor. 4:7] As for the fact that these vessels are said to be broken when touched by the **rod**, we should understand here a part of the vessels that is still being destroyed in order to be remoulded for the better. Hence it is said to the **potter** of mankind: *Turn the wicked, and they shall not be*, [Prov. 12:7] implying “they shall not be wicked, but good.” Now what is meant by the first words, **he that shall overcome, and keep my works unto the end**? Is no one ruling believers until he triumphs over the Devil by reaching **the end**? Or maybe he will rule afterwards? Therefore one should know that the Lord, using the future instead of the past, is indicating that those to whom he proclaims he **will give power over the nations**, have already **overcome** by the grace of predestination, and have already kept **his works unto the end**; as if he were saying, “I will rightly give the duty of ruling to the one who I find out for certain is victorious and will continue my works unto the end.” This is because for him the future is the present. **And I will give him the morning star**. In the sacred Scripture, **the morning star** in the singular signifies Christ (whence he says later, *I am the morning star*) [Rev. 22:16] and in the plural it signifies angels. So the Lord will give **the morning star** to those who **overcome**, when he remoulds the body of our humility, that is, when all those who are in the graves hear the voice of the Lord and come forth: [John 5:28-29] he will bring them *to the perfect day* [Prov. 4:18] when he shows them the brightness of his divinity.

COMMENTARY

NOTES

(1) [Augustinus Hipponensis, De haeresibus, PL 42.26.5]

(2) « Carbuncle » < Latin *carbunculus*, meaning primarily a small piece of coal.

(3) The two words differ only in one letter in Latin, so it is easy to imagine how variants could have arisen.

CHAPTER 3

VERSES 1-2

And to the angel of the church of Sardis, write: These things saith he, that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive: but thou art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, which were ready to die. The Lord has **the seven spirits** in a different way from the way he has the stars, for he has the sevenfold Spirit as an entity equal to him in the nature of the divinity, while he has the sevenfold Church as an entity subject to him in his power, as a servant. Now if he indicates that this **angel**, whether in the preachers or in some of his listeners, **has the name of being alive** through confession of faith alone, but is **dead** in works, how is it that he adds in order to warn the same, **Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which were ready to die**? One should know therefore that he shows that he is partly **dead** through his faults, and partly **alive** through good works. Now how can someone be partly **alive** if he is **dead**, even because of one

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fault, if not because, if he rises again from sin through penance, he does not even lose, once he is **alive**, the good things he did when he was **dead**, because those things are themselves brought back to life with him? This is why he hears, **Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which were ready to die**, which means, “If you come back to life in that part in which you are dead, you strengthen the other things that are still alive in you, in order that they do not die.” Alternatively, there are many people within the bosom of the Church who, keeping their lives from all fault, are considered **alive** by men, but are regarded as **dead** by God because their intention is not right, and these are told, **Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which were ready to die**, as if they were told, “If you want the framework of your merits to be alive, watch the intention behind your works; pride will be alive.”¹ **For I find not thy works full before my God.** That is, since the head, which is intention, has lost its vigor, the limbs, which are the merits, are by no means vigorous, full or plump, but they languish, meagre and almost dead.

VERSE 3

Have in mind therefore in what manner thou hast received and heard: and observe, and do penance. This sentence can be ascribed to both senses. Indeed he had heard, *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all*, [James 2:10] as well as *If thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome*. [Matt. 6:23] **If then thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know when I will come.** To **watch** is to rise from the sleep of sin to justice through the

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tears of repentance. The comparison with **a thief** that is introduced here is a fit one, since when **a thief** arrives unexpectedly, he massacres everyone he finds asleep and plunders their possessions: so does the heavenly judge kill the unrepentant with a sentence of punishment when he comes to them unexpectedly, and destroy their actions like a very strong robber.

VERSE 4

But I have a few names in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy. Those who do not stain **their garments** with filth are those who commit no deadly sin after the sacrament of baptism; but since they are rare, it is first said **a few names**. Where then, Lord, shall they **walk** with you to? Where from, and where to, if not from you into you? For they **walk** with you every day, because they follow and observe the footprints of your Passion. You lead the way by giving examples, and they follow by imitating those examples. By **worthy** he means either “clean” or “wholly deserving my esteem.” Now should those who defile their lives after baptism lose hope? No. Let them therefore run to the blood of the Lamb, not so that they may be wetted in it by the water of baptism again, but that they may be washed from the stains of their sins by a fountain of tears; whence there soon follows:

VERSE 5

He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments. That is, he who fights against the enemy to get

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his **garments** back, and overcomes, will be **clothed** in the same **garments** again and shine in the same way as those who have kept them unstained. This can also apply to the unfaithful, who are exhorted to **overcome**, that is to believe in Christ; *because this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith.* [1 John 5:4] **And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.** A great question arises for us in this place: for these words seem to mean that the name of the one who does not overcome is blotted out from **the book**, while it is well-known that only the elect are kept in heaven's book, written there by the pen of blessed predestination. Then it remains for us to understand the names of the reprobates being blotted out from **the book of life** as a way of speaking, usual in the sacred Scripture, meaning that, due to reprobation, they are not written at all; in the same way as Pharaoh's heart is said to be hardened by the Lord. [Ex. 4:21; 7:3, 13, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8] As for this **book**, it is some kind of divine force which predestined before the ages a certain and determined number of elect to be in glory in the future. So we should take what is said about the victor, **I will not blot out his name out of the book of life**, as if he were saying, "The one who I know will be victorious, I am already keeping his name written in heaven." **And I will confess his name before my Father and his angels.** What does it mean for the Son of God to confess the victor's name before the **Father** and the **angels**, if not to show that he who has **overcome** is united to him by his good works? Which will happen principally when he says to the elect, *Come, ye blessed of my Father*, etc. [Matt. 25:34]

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VERSES 7-8

And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia, write: These things saith the Holy One and the true one, he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth, and no man openeth: Behold, I have given before thee a door opened, which no man can shut. The Lord is called **the Holy One and the True One** as if he were the only one, because compared to him no one is holy or truthful. It is indeed written, *No one is clean from filth*, [Variant of Job 14:4, very close to the LXX version.] as well as, *Every man is a liar*. [Ps. 115:11] We take **the key of David** to mean our Redeemer's incarnation, which he got from the seed of David. The **door**, which the same **key opens and shuts**, is Christ himself, according to this: *I am the door*, etc. [John 10:9] For he is called the **key** and the **door** in the same way as in the Gospel he is called the shepherd as well as both the porter and the door. [Ibid.1-5] So the **open door** is Christ born according to the flesh, having suffered, and resurrected on the third day; the **door** however is not **open** to the incredulous, but to believers. The Jews were trying to shut this **door** when they scourged the apostles and charged them that they should not speak in the name of Jesus; [Acts 5:40] but since when he **opens, no man shuts**, they replied immediately, *We cannot but speak the things which we have heard*. [Acts 4:17-20] As this door was shut to the Asians, the apostles tried to open it; but since when he **shuts, no man opens**, the spirit of Jesus stopped them. [Acts 16:7] The **open door** may also be taken to mean the Scripture, through which we come in towards Christ with the steps of faith. So he opens the door with **the key of David**, and **no man shuts**, because no one

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is able, with any veil of the Jews, to cast a shadow in the elect's hearts over the words of the sacred Scripture, which he made his elect understand spiritually by the grace of his incarnation. On the other hand, he **shuts** it for the unbelieving Jews, and it cannot be opened by anyone. This too can be analyzed symbolically: **because thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.** Here it is no small question that arises: how can someone have only a **little strength** if they keep the word of God and do **not deny his name**? We should know therefore that it was said according to the estimation of human weakness, because, while the elect are capable of many things through Christ, they presume that they are capable of little. Indeed **Thou hast a little strength** is said as if it were said "Thou thinkest that thou hast a little strength."

VERSE 9

Behold, I will bring of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will make them to come and adore before thy feet. And they shall know that I have loved thee. In this passage is foretold the faith of the Jews, according to this: *until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.* [Rom. 11:25-26] Now they **say they are Jews, but are not**, because they have lost on the inside spiritually the name they bear on the outside literally; for the expression of the name of **Jews** is the confession of Christ. However, when Elijah and Enoch are preaching,² they will come to adore before the Church's feet, because

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they will venerate it by following the examples of its action.

VERSE 10

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, etc. The **word of patience** is what the Lord showed in example when he prayed on the cross for his persecutors, [Luke 23:34] and taught in words, saying, *In your patience you shall possess your souls.* [Luke 21:19] As for what follows, **I will also keep thee from the hour of the temptation, which shall come upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth,** it should be taken as referring to the times of the Antichrist, under whom there will be so great a tribulation as has never been from the beginning of the world. [Matt. 24:21] For bodily wounds will be hard, but more grievous will be the miracles³ of the enemies. But the saints will be preserved from the trial of deception, because they will not be provoked to the negation of Christ.

VERSE 11

I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast. The Lord says he will **come quickly**, so that no one should give up in the struggle. For everything that passes happens quickly. What he tells him to **hold fast** is the conduct of heavenly life, and he gives the reason, adding, **that no other man take thy crown.** In this phrase we see that the certain and determined number of the elect is embraced, and we contemplate with an absolutely amazing thought the fact that no one can be added to or subtracted from it.

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VERSES 12-13

He that shall overcome, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. God's **temple** is the Church, according to this: *The temple of God is holy, which you are.* [1 Cor. 3:17] Since not only the preachers, but also the good listeners triumph over the old enemy, and in this verse everyone who **overcomes** is said to become a **pillar** in God's temple, we are forced to confess that a **pillar** is the same as **the temple**, that is the universal Church. In what follows, **and he shall go out no more**, it is openly shown that the Church, in the younger brother, had once passed from the unity of faith and work it kept in the prophets under the law to the error of perfidy and perverse work; but it was recovered through the killing of the fatted calf. [Luke 15:11-31] Alternatively, all of us, Jews as well as Gentiles, went out in Adam; but after we have been brought in victorious to the second Adam, we are made into a **pillar of God's temple**, because, overcoming the temptations of the old enemy through the blood of that same Mediator of ours, we are established in the heavenly glory of the saints by that steadfastness in the commandments which we are demonstrated to have lost in the first Adam. But we shall never go out again, because no incitements of the enemy shall tear us away from that common happiness of the heavenly fatherland. Note also that he says he has a **God** as he speaks according to his humanity. **And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and my new name. He that hath ears, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.** The name of the Father being written on the one

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who overcomes means that he becomes his Son by adoption of the Spirit. Indeed, with what pen is it written, if not with the grace of the Spirit of both? Whence the apostle: *The Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.* [Rom. 8:16] As for **Jerusalem**, it translates to “sight of peace.” It is said to **come down out of heaven from God** because the Church of the elect, which directs its course towards the sight of heavenly peace with the steps of love, went down, as it was predestined to, into the womb of the Virgin together with the Lord, whose body it is; or it is because its number increases every day through heavenly grace. It is called **new** because, through baptism and love, it is stripped of the oldness of the earthly man and clothed in heavenly newness; whence this: *The old things are passed away, and behold all things are made new.* [2 Cor. 5:17] So the name of **Jerusalem** is written on the victor when he joins the number of the saints. As for where we get all this from, it is revealed when it is added **and my new name** (implying **I will write**) namely the one that was given in time to the same Mediator, that is “Christ.” This is where our dignity and high position comes from, this is the cause of our being called sons of God, **New Jerusalem**, and Christians. Therefore, where we hear the sum of all salvation, let us at last put a due end to this book.

HERE ENDS THE SECOND BOOK

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HERE BEGINS THE THIRD BOOK

VERSE 14

And to the angel of the church of Laodicea, write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is the beginning of the creation of God. Amen translates to “true,” which we should take as referring to that Truth which said about itself, *I am the truth*. [John 14:6] Although the Lord has many faithful and true witnesses, it is appropriate for him to be called **the faithful and true** one as if he were the only one, because compared to him no one is faithful and truthful: for he is **faithful**, truthful, and good by nature, whereas we are so because he shares those qualities with us. As for how it is that the Son alone is called the **witness** when *there are three that give testimony*, [1 John 5:7] it has already been explained in the first book. Finally, the Son is called the **beginning of the creation of God** because it is from him that all things have got the beginning of existence; for, as it is written, *All things were made by him*. [John 1:3]

VERSES 15-16

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold, nor hot. I would thou wert cold, or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth. The **cold** ones are those whom either the perfidy of the Jews or the error of the Gentiles keeps bound, because the one who said, *I will sit in the sides of the North*, [Is. 14:13] binds them with his ice. On the other hand, the **hot** ones are those whose hearts

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the South wind, that is the Holy Spirit, comes to and touches with the heat of faith, so that, the hardness of incredulity being softened and the cold of error being lost, they emanate the heat of good works. Both someone **cold** and someone **hot** often become **lukewarm**: someone **cold** becomes **lukewarm** when they turn away from the cold of iniquity but do not pass to the perfect heat of justice, and someone **hot** becomes **lukewarm** if they come down from the heat of justice to the inactivity of sluggishness. Then, we have all learned from experience that something **cold** or **hot** easily passes into our body, but something **lukewarm** provokes nausea and is thrown right out of the **mouth**. So teachers can more easily attract an unfaithful person to faith or a perverted Christian to fervor for good work, than they can a **lukewarm** person; and so they forsake him, as a farmer leaves an unfruitful land and cultivates the one from which he has already plucked out the thorns and which is fruitful, or the one which, albeit still full of thorns, seems to promise it will be fruitful.

VERSE 17

Because thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind. Whoever boasts of being **rich** on account of the confession of the right faith, if he does not cease to do evil, is not **rich**, but **poor**; and any one of the lukewarm, since he does not understand this, can rightly be blamed by the Lord as **wretched, miserable, poor, naked, and blind: wretched**, because he is deceiving himself; **miserable**, because he does not realize he is fooling himself; **poor** and naked,

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because he is void of true virtues; but in an even worse manner because he is not even conscious of it, whence he is also deservedly called **blind**. But since divine kindness calls some of the lukewarm to the heat of justice, it is suitably said after that:

VERSE 18

I counsel thee to buy gold fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich. Gold in this passage is taken to mean God's wisdom incarnate, concerning which it is said elsewhere, *Take wisdom as gold*. [Variant of Prov. 16:16] It is right for this **gold** to be called **fire-tried**, because our Redeemer was tested by the **fire** of the Passion. The meaning is: If you want to be rich in virtues, take me as an example, so that you too may become gold melted by fire. Now what price shall a poor person give for this **gold** but a pious state of mind in his prayer? To him it is said in addition: **and mayest be clothed in white garments, that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear.** Someone is **clothed in white garments** to cover **the shame** of their **nakedness** when they **buy gold fire-tried**, convert to a new life to avoid the shame of lukewarmness, and deserve, thanks to their imitation of him, to be connected with the new and heavenly man. **And anoint thy eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.** As if it were saying: Apply the divine commandments to your blind mind, so that you may see the nakedness in virtues you are suffering from and hurry to cover it. Indeed, if the divine commandments were not **eye salve**, the Psalmist would not say, *The commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes*. [Ps. 18:9] **Eye salve**, which is made from earth and removes the dust of

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the earth from the eyes, may represent the temporal poverty our Redeemer assumed for us. Therefore let him who has his eyes blinded with dust put **eye salve** on them to recover sight, that is, let him who gets lost due to earthly pleasures bring back to his mind his Redeemer's temporal poverty, so that he may contemplate with his inward eyes the future rewards of the saints.

VERSE 19

Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise. Rebuke is about words, chastisement is about whips. There is nothing more that needs explaining in this sentence, but it just needs to be embraced willingly. **Be zealous therefore, and do penance.** As if he were saying, “If you do not take whip blows temporarily here with them, you shall be subjected to eternal torments without them.” [Matt. 19:28]

VERSE 20

Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. This is not to be taken as a physical act of standing, but as a placeless one, because when the Lord dwells in someone, he does not leave him to pass to someone else. The **gate** signifies the mind's entrance, which the Lord **knocks** at on his own, with no companion, by inspiring: his **voice** is heard by whoever keeps the advice of his commandments out of love, and this person **opens the door** when he broadens his heart to see the highest good of eternity. Finally, when **the door** has been opened, the Lord **comes**

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in to him, because he illuminates through inner sweetness the soul burning with desire. So the Head **sup**s..... because by doing the Father's will every day..... the limbs..... ⁵ with the Head, the limbs which die with him every day in order to do the Father's will, as in *for you are dead*, etc. [Col. 3:3]

VERSE 21

To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne: as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne. The Lord victorious sits in the Father's **throne** because, after the Passion and Resurrection, he showed that he was equal to the Father. He says that we also sit in it, because we receive power of judgment in the Son's power, according to this: *You, who have followed me, you shall sit on twelve seats*, etc.⁴ It is not inconsistent with the truth that he says elsewhere we will *sit on twelve thrones* and here on his **throne**; for by the *twelve thrones* is indicated universal judgment, and by the **throne** of the Son a unique summit of judicial power. Therefore the same thing is indicated by the *twelve thrones* and by the one **throne** of the Son. We should however ask the question of how it is that he says all victors will judge, whereas not all will, but some of those who **overcome** will judge, and others will be judged. One should know then that they will have in others the power they do not have in themselves, in the same way as the whole body of a man has the power to speak through the mouth and to see through the eyes. Now if we look more subtly at the phrase in which it is said **as I also have overcome**, we find that it indicates those who are more brilliant and outstanding in their victory.

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NOTES

(1) Although it is still possible to make some sense of this as it is, I wonder if the Latin text here may not be corrupt, and if it should not have been something along the lines of « Watch that pride should not corrupt the intention behind your works », or, alternatively, if there was not an « or » left out by someone: « Watch the intentions behind your works, or pride will be alive (rather than the framework of your merits). »

(2) According to a tradition followed by many early Church writers, Enoch and Elijah are expected to come prior to the second coming of Christ at the end of the world. These two OT prophets have been linked to the two witnesses found in Rev. 11:1-14.

(3) Both editions I have used indicate in the margin that the MS has « miracles », but change it to « darts » in the body of the text. « Miracles » makes sense to me, since the Antichrist and his disciples will do miracles to seduce people, which would be the « deception » mentioned in the next sentence.

(4) The first meaning of the Latin verb here translated as « be zealous » is « emulate ».

(5) Gaps in the Latin text.

CHAPTER 4

VERSE 1

After these things I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven. The Redeemer's Nativity is recapitulated, and these things had already been said with various other symbols; as when one relates one event in different ways, the narrations will each have a different time, but not the event itself, which happened in one time. We should however ask the question of why John does not disclose the time of his prophecy, while other prophets used to disclose by the kings the length of the interval between one vision and another. It is because he is informing us that

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the whole time of the Church should be related to that continuous day of resurrection about which it is said, *Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection*; [Rev. 20:6] for the first resurrection, that is the one by which souls rise again from the death of sin to the life of justice, is now going on all the time. Now with what eyes did John see this **door**? As far as the figurative vision is concerned, he did not of course see it with the eyes of the flesh, but with those of the mind; but for what concerns the truth of the thing itself, truth which had already been manifested when the Lord had appeared in the flesh, not only did he see it with the eyes of the flesh, but he even touched it with his hands. The open **door** represents Christ, who has already been manifested to all the faithful by being born, dying, and rising again. It is appropriate for this **door** to be seen **in heaven**, that is in the Church, because it is in the Church that people proclaim and believe that our Redeemer was born, suffered, was resurrected, and went up to heaven. **And the first voice which I heard, was, as it were, of a trumpet speaking with me, saying: Come up hither.** Whither, but to the **door** and **heaven**, that is Christ and the Church? And with what steps, but those of faith? It is right for John to be invited to this by the **first voice**, because every one of the elect, in order that they may reach the mysteries of the true faith through the Gospel without the foot of belief striking against any obstacle, is strengthened by the teaching of the Old Testament, which preceded the new teaching. It is also right for this **voice** to be compared to **a trumpet**, because it is calling us to a spiritual war; whence this: *Lift up thy voice like a trumpet*. [Is. 58:1] In what is said after that, **I will shew thee the things which must be done hereafter**, he does not deny that the Church

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already has high honors, but he shows that they will last until the end of the world.

VERSE 2

And immediately I was in the spirit. If this is taken as referring to John, it means that he was taken into ecstasy; if it is taken as referring to the Church, these words show its spiritual conversion. **And behold there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting.** Both **heaven** and **the throne** represent the Church, for genus is joined to genus in such a way that not two things are understood, but one. So **the throne is set in heaven** when **heaven** itself, that is the Church, deserves to be presided over by the Lord. As for the **one sitting on the throne**, he is nothing else but the Son of man appearing in the midst of the golden candlesticks: the only difference is that there he is walking, that is bestowing gifts, and here he is **sitting**, that is making judgment between everyone by administering justice according to the gifts they have been offered. Indeed the fact that the **one sitting** in this passage represents the Son is disclosed when it is said after that:

VERSE 3

And he that sat, was to the sight like the jasper and the sardine stone. By **the jasper**, which is green, are represented the green pastures of the paradise; and what are those pastures but Christ's divinity, in which all things live? As the same John said, *He that hath the Son, hath life.* [1 John 5:12] By **the sardine stone**, which has a resemblance to red earth, is represented our Redeemer's humanity,

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because *truth is sprung out of the earth*. [Ps. 84:12] The species of these stones may also represent the Church. **And there was a rainbow round about the throne, like to the sight of an emerald.** By the **rainbow** is represented the reconciliation of the world achieved through the plan of the Word incarnate. Indeed the sun illuminated a cloud and **a rainbow** appeared, because when the Father's Word, which is the *Sun of justice*, [Mal. 4:2] shed rays of light on human nature by adopting it, this very adoption of his humanity, which is called a cloud by the prophet,¹ became the reconciliation of the world. The very interpretation of the noun agrees with this, for if you add one letter and say *irini*, it means "peace" in Greek.² When he illuminates the solid hearts of the saints, which are called clouds, they give the appearance of a bow, because they are bent towards piety by the fact of praying to God. There is here a fitting connection of symbols, because below, *lightnings and thunders* are said to *proceed from the throne*, as though from a cloud. Then, since **a rainbow** shines principally with two colors, namely that of water and that of fire, what is represented is either baptism by water and by the Holy Spirit, or the preceding judgment through the flood and the following one through fire. It is in order that it may be shown more openly in this passage that the divinity was propitiated to the world again by him, that it is compared **to the sight of an emerald**; for this stone is of a very green color, which it is not unfitting to apply to the nature of the divinity.

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VERSE 4

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats, four and twenty ancients sitting. As in the Gospel the Lord mentions twelve thrones, [Matt. 19:28] what does it mean that John says there are **twenty-four**, if not that, because of the two testaments, the number of the twelve tribes is also doubled? Therefore, regarding the distinction between both testaments, there are **twenty-four** thrones, and as many **ancients**; but regarding the unity and harmony between those same testaments, there are only twelve. We should not however understand things only carnally and think that the one **throne** is one thing and the **twenty-four seats** another; for because it is specifically and chiefly the Lord who will judge the whole Church, the **ancients** and **the seats** are for this reason said to be one **throne**; but because the holy preachers of both testaments will examine with him the people below them, consequently **twenty-four ancients sit on twenty-four seats round about the throne**. As for what is said after that concerning the **ancients, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold**, it refers to the whole Church, which clothes **in white garments**, that is in the inviolate sacraments of baptism. It has **crowns of gold on its head** because it truly triumphs over the author of death. Alternatively, this number may symbolize the holy Church because of the perfection of the number six, completed by the four books of the Gospel; or if not, then surely because the Church uses the **twenty-four** books of the Old Testament.

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VERSES 5- 6

And from the throne proceeded lightnings, and voices, and thunders. Here it is clearly shown that the throne symbolizes the Church, which all these things tally with. For by **lightnings** we understand miraculous signs; whence the Psalmist: *Thy lightnings enlightened the world*, [Ps. 76:19] and by **voices and thunders** is represented the preaching of the truth, as the same Psalmist said: *The voice of thy thunder in a wheel*. [Ibid.] Note also that, passing obliquely, as it were, from one symbol to another, he says that these things **proceed from the throne** while they do not correspond to a **throne** but to a cloud. Therefore by **the throne** he wants us to understand the cloud. It is fitting for the Church of the just to be symbolized by a cloud, because its preachers rain words, **thunder** with threats, and flash with miracles. **And there were seven lamps burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. And in the sight of the throne was, as it were, a sea of glass like to crystal.** It is fitting for the Holy Spirit to be compared to **lamps**, because he kindles the hearts of the elect to the love of God and neighbor. As for the **sea of glass**, what is symbolized by it but baptism? And why is it of **glass**, if not because the faith of those who go through it is being indicated with a figurative expression, in which what is caused is being represented by what causes it? Indeed, just as in **glass** you can see nothing from the outside but that which is carried inside of it, so is the Church's faith sincere in its belief on the inside, and so does it appear truthful in confession on the outside. Yet, so that it should not be thought to be fragile like **glass**, it was added **like to crystal**. Indeed, just as ice compressed by the

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winter's cold, after many years, hardens in such a way that it resembles a stone and becomes **crystal**, so is the faith of the saints solidified with time among oppressions. **And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind.** No one doubts that by these **four living creatures** are represented the four evangelists. But if they are **in the midst of the throne**, how can they be said to be **round about the throne**? Especially since it has already been said that the Lord was **sitting in the midst of the throne, and the twenty-four ancients round about the throne**. One should know then that the **living creatures** are found in the Lord, and the Lord in the **living creatures**; and again the **living creatures** in the **ancients**, and the **ancients** in the **living creatures**. The species of the **four creatures** may also indicate the Church in general. So the **living creatures are full of eyes** because as many words of the sacred Scriptures as there are, there are so many spiritual lights for the elect, by which they are illuminated to faith. **Their eyes are before and behind** because they contain in themselves the mysteries of the Old and of the New Testament. For **before** is used in this passage to mean the past. Alternatively, they have **eyes before and behind** because they announce some things that have been fulfilled and some that are to be fulfilled, or because they lament past sins and guard against future ones.

VERSE 7

And the first living creature was like a lion: and the second living creature like a calf: and the third living creature, having the face, as it were, of a man: and the

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fourth living creature was like an eagle flying. We should ask the question of why John said that **the first living creature was like a lion** while Ezekiel says that the appearance of man was in the first animal.³ So, either the historical order (which the mystical words of the Scriptures do not always keep) has been changed, or he put the symbol of the **lion** first because it is not on account of the Nativity or of the Passion that people have believed in Christ, but on account of the Resurrection, which is symbolized by the **lion**. Finally, since he began⁴ with the human generation, [Sc. of Jesus. Matt. 1:1 et seq.] Matthew is appropriately represented by the **man**; since he began with the cry in the desert, [Mark 1:3] Mark is appropriately represented by the **lion**; since he started with a sacrifice, [Luke 1:8] Luke is well represented by the **calf**; and John, who began with the divinity, [John 1:1 et seq.] is fittingly represented by the **eagle**. All this can also refer to Christ and all his limbs. However, for brevity's sake, let us content ourselves with what we have said here.

VERSE 8

And the four living creatures had each of them six wings. We take the **wings** of **the four living creatures** to mean the words of the two Testaments. Then, although these **wings** are two, because of the doubled number twelve found in the tribes of Israel and the apostles, they are multiplied by twelve, and give twenty-four. In the same way, because of the knowledge of the Trinity that they spread throughout the world, they are also multiplied by three, and six appear in all. Alternatively, the **six wings** may be taken to mean the six laws: the first which is the

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natural law, the second which is that of Moses, the third which is that of the prophets, the fourth which is that of grace, the fifth which is that of the apostles, and the sixth which is that of the synods; by all of which the Church flies to heaven. **And round about and within they are full of eyes.** The **living creatures are full of eyes both round about and within** because the holy Church shows the light of preaching to believers, but conceals it from the unfaithful; or because the holy preachers show the way of faith and holiness to the minds of little people as though on the outside through the history only, and to the minds of perfect people as though on the inside through allegory; or because they incessantly see to it to provide their brothers with good examples on the outside, and to persevere in right intention on the inside.

And they rest not day and night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who is, and who was, and who is to come. They rest not, that is, they do not desist from their cry; whence it is clear that the four living creatures represent the whole Church, because not only the evangelists, but also all the faithful do not desist from praising God day and night, that is in success and in adversity. By the fact of saying **holy** thrice, they indicate the three Persons. On the other hand, by saying **Lord God Almighty**, they show the one-substanced God in these three Persons. Yet, how can the words **who is to come** in the aforementioned praise correspond to the Trinity, when only the Son will come in his humanity to judge? One should know then that the invisible Trinity will assume the person of the Son and examine the just and sinners through it. It will not however come by passing from one place to

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another, but by showing its manifest power through the human form adopted by it, which will come down from heaven to the lower regions. We may also understand in this passage the divinity's present coming by which its saints are illuminated every day.

VERSES 9-10

And when those living creatures gave glory, and honour, and benediction to him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever; the four and twenty ancients fell down, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever. Here the **living creatures** no longer indicate a genus, but a species, namely the evangelists; but by the **twenty-four ancients** is represented the universal Church in its superior and inferior members. So the **living creatures give glory and honor to him that sits on the throne**, when the holy evangelists teach us that he ought to be praised for all good things, as in *Every best gift*, etc. [James 1:17] As the evangelists are thus speaking, the **twenty-four ancients**, that is all the saints, **fall down**, because they feel humble. They adore God at the same time as they fall, because they honor God by the very fact of attributing nothing to themselves. This **fall and adoration** should be understood as spiritual, according to this: *God is a spirit; and they that adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth*. [John 4:24] **And cast their crowns before the throne, saying**, etc. He is repeating the very same thing: for the ancients laying **their crowns before the throne** mean the elect, with a pious confession of the mind, laying down before their consciences, which God presides over, the swelling of pride for the virtues they have received, and

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attributing everything to him who presides over them;
which is also why they say:

VERSE 11

Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory, and honour, and power, as if they were saying, “These things principally fit thee, from whom, by whom, and in whom is the glory, honor, and power³ of the saints.” Yet, what is meant by what follows, **because thou hast created all things; and for thy will they were, and have been created?** If they have been **created**, how can they have been before they were **created**? One should know then that they **were** in the predestination before they came into being in deed.

NOTES

(1) This reference of the “cloud by the prophet,” is probably linked to Rev. 10:1, since Alcuin gives the same interpretation of the cloud as symbolizing his humanity/flesh.

(2) If you take the word used in the Latin for « rainbow », which is the Greek-borrowed word *iris*, or *irin* in one of its grammatical cases, and add *i* to the latter, it gives *irini*, which resembles (and probably yet more so in the pronunciation used by the author) Greek εἰρήνη (eirene), « peace ».

(3) Ezek. 1:5 et seq. However, Ezekiel rather speaks of four living creatures each having four faces (one of a man, one of a lion, one of an ox, and one of an eagle) ; but the likeness of man is the first thing mentioned in the description of the living creatures, and the man face is also the first of the faces to be mentioned.

(4) His Gospel.

(5) The Latin word can also translate as « virtue ».

COMMENTARY

CHAPTER 5

VERSE 1

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and without. By the one **sitting on the throne** is indicated the person of the Father, and by **the right hand** of the one sitting, the same Father's Son through whom all things were made, and concerning whom it is said by the voice of the Father, *I will lift up my hand to heaven, and I will swear by my right hand.* [Deut. 32:40 acc. to LXX.] As for the **book written within and without**, it seems to contain both Testaments, namely the Old and the New; and while the Old was open **without** with regards to its literal meaning, with regards to its mystical meaning, it was hiding the New within. Alternatively, **written within**, the **book** represents the allegory, and **written without** it represents the history. The reason why the Old and the New Testament are said to be one **book** is that neither can the New be separated from the Old nor the Old from the New. It is right for the **book** to be said to be in his **right hand**, because the principal focus of the divine Scriptures is on the plan of our Redeemer. **Sealed with seven seals.** The number **seven** often indicates totality. The **book** is said to be **sealed with seven seals** because the plan of the Savior Lord, before it had been revealed in the fullness of the time, [Cf. Gal. 4:4] lay concealed in the divine volumes by a fullness of all sorts of hidden mysteries. If there is someone for whom this interpretation is not enough, let them know that in the **seven seals** are encompassed the **seven** moods of verbs: the indicative, as in this answer given to the prophet: *I am the*

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Lord that speak justice; [Is. 45:19] the enunciative, as in *Hearken to me, O Jacob, and thou Israel whom I call*, etc.; [Is. 48:12] the imperative, as in *Cry, cease not*; [Is. 58:1] the optative, like in *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!*; [Is. 48:18] the conjunctive, as in *If you will keep my covenant, you shall be my peculiar possession*; [Ex. 19:5] the infinitive, as in *To abstain from evil, is understanding*; [Job 28:28 acc. to LXX.] and impersonal, such as in *Who shall declare the powers of the Lord?* [Ps. 105:2]⁽¹⁾

VERSE 2

And I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice: Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? By the **strong angel** we should understand a herald of the law, *for the lips of the priest keep knowledge, and they seek the law at his mouth: because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts*. [Mal. 2:7] Now what does it mean to ask **who is worthy to open the book**, if not to anxiously long for Christ, who could show that the law had been fulfilled and revealed in him, so that it no longer needed to be kept and understood carnally, but spiritually? It is right for the **book** to be opened first, and for its seven **seals to be loosed** afterwards, because the proclamations of the divine law were first fulfilled in Christ, and then in a certain manner in the whole body, as shown by the opening of the individual **seals**. Then since Christ had not yet come, it is fittingly said after that:

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VERSE 3

And no man was able, neither in heaven, that is no angel was able to, **nor on earth,** that is no human being, **nor under the earth,** that is no soul, **to open the book, nor to look on it:** for none of these was able to achieve the plan for the salvation of man. But, blessed John, how could no one **look on the book,** while you yourself say, “I saw a book in the right hand of God?” Perhaps you were **neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth?** Then, in order for it not to be contradictory, we should take **look on** to mean “comprehend.” Indeed, who is able to comprehend how God can become incarnate without seed, how a man God can come out of the closed womb of a virgin, and how the Lord of glory can be crucified, when only the flesh dies?

VERSE 4

And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it. By no means is it believed that John, who wrote this after the opening of this **book,** **wept** in his own person, but in that of the Church of before Christ's coming, which, burdened with the weight of sins, was anxiously seeking the presence of its Mediator. It is also in the person of this Church that David says, *My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?* [Ps. 41:4] A consolation is directed at it in what is said after that:

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VERSE 5

And one of the ancients said to me: Weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. By this **ancient** we understand the order of the prophets, by whose prophecies the Church was comforted, as in *The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thighs, till he come that is to be sent.* [Gen. 49:10] Note also that Christ is here called a **lion** because he overcame the Devil, while in the following verse he is called a *lamb* because he redeemed the world by sacrificing himself. As for **the root of David**, it means the kin and son of David. Moreover it should be noted that in the words **hath prevailed**, he used the past for the future, as in *They have dug my hands*, etc. [Ps. 21:17]

VERSE 6

And I saw: and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain, having seven horns and seven eyes: which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. As already said, **the throne**, the **living creatures**, and **the ancients** signify the Church, in the middle of which stands the Lamb, according to this: *I will declare thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the church will I praise thee.* [Ps. 21:23] As for what we read elsewhere, *The Lord is round about his people*, [Ps. 124:2] it is not incompatible, because he both presides in the middle where he rules and judges it, and goes round about it to protect and defend it. Now why do we read here

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that he is **standing** while we read above that he is sitting, if not because there were shown examination and kingdom, while here is shown assistance? Indeed sitting is the attitude of one reigning and judging, while **standing** is the attitude of one giving assistance. Note also that he is seen not slain, but **as it were slain**; for even though he was crucified due to weakness, he lives by the power of God. Alternatively, Christ is, not slain, but **as it were slain**, every time his limbs either mortify themselves voluntarily or endure persecutions so as to fill up in themselves those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ. [Cf. Col. 1:24] By the **seven horns**, as John himself has explained, is represented the Holy Spirit's sevenfold operation, which is demonstrated not only to have rested in the Head, but also to have illuminated the entire body, which is why in this passage **the seven spirits of God** are said to have been **sent forth into all the earth**. This sevenfold operation, which is symbolized by the **horns** because of its kingdom and strength, is also fittingly represented by the **eyes** because it illuminates the Church. Alternatively, by the **horns**, which rise above the flesh, we may also understand the more outstanding people in the Church, to whom it is said, *You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit*. [Rom. 8:9]

VERSE 7

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. The **right hand of him that sits on the throne** is the same as the Lamb *as it were slain in the midst of the throne*, because the Son of God through whom the world was created and the Son of man through whom man was redeemed are not two, but one Christ.

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Therefore the Lamb, that is the Son of man, **took the book**, that is the plan for the salvation of man, to which every page of the Scriptures bears witness, from himself, that is from his divinity.

VERSE 8

And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. The **Lamb opened the book** when he fulfilled the work of his voluntary Passion. Now what does it mean that the **living creatures and the ancients have harps**, if not that the Church of the elect is filling up those things which are wanting of the afflictions of Christ? [Cf. Col. 1:24] It is fitting for the sufferings of Christ to be symbolized by **harps**, for in a **harp** some strings are stretched more tightly and others more loosely, but, albeit stretched differently, they do not at all produce each a different song: it is the same with the different members in the body of Christ: some imitate his sufferings more fully and others less, but they resound with one praise in harmony. So the **living creatures and the ancients fall before the Lamb with harps** because all the saints attribute the merit of everything they suffer for Christ to Christ and not to themselves. By **the golden vials** we understand love, a love capable of praying not only for friends but also for enemies, which is why it is said that they were **full**. It is right for the **vials** to be mentioned after the **harps**, because the Lord first climbed the cross, and then thus prayed for

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his persecutors with an incomparable love, saying, *Father, forgive them*, etc. [Luke 23:34]

VERSE 9

And they sung a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to take the book, etc. Christ sang a **new canticle** by preaching it in words and following it in acts. Now what does it mean to say, **Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation**, if not “Compared to our victories, thy victory alone is considered one, by which we were redeemed from the prince of death and the malediction of the law?” By the fact that the four living creatures and the twenty-four ancients say they have been **redeemed out of every tribe, and tongue, and nation**, it is clearly shown that by them is represented the universal Church.

VERSE 10

And hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. The elect are **kings**, when, by restraining their bodies, it is as if they were reigning over a subjected **earth** with the law of virtue, which is why they affirm they have received **a kingdom** on earth too. They are **priests** because they offer themselves to God by chastising themselves every day, according to this: *A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit*. [Ps. 50:19]

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VERSES 11, 12, and 13

And I saw, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the ancients. By saying that he **heard the voice**, he shows what kind of seeing this was; for he sees sounds and hears visions. Now if, as already said, the *living creatures and the ancients are round about the throne*, how can there be any **angel round about** the same **throne**, if not because those same living creatures and ancients are **angels**? About whom it is said, *The angels of peace shall weep bitterly*. [Is. 33:7] Though the heavenly military may also be understood by the name of **angels**; but whether it is about the latter or about the former, their countless multitude is shown when it is said after that, **and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction, and every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and under the sea, and the things that are in it.** The sea and the things that are in it represent this world. **I heard all saying: To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever.** Saying **all**, he means again those whom he said above the whole Church was made up of, that is the *living creatures, the ancients, and the angels*. In **the one who sits** and the **Lamb**, that is in the Father and the Son, according to the rule mentioned earlier, the Holy Spirit is also understood.

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VERSE 14

And the four living creatures said: Amen. And the four and twenty ancients fell down on their faces, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever. Since the **living creatures** and the **ancients** are one, that is one Church, the **living creatures fall down** and adore him with the **ancients**, and the ancients confirm with the living creatures that the praises are true, replying **Amen** in an affirmative expression. Their fall and adoration, as already said, must be taken as spiritual. Now, so that we should not get tired beyond measure by going on too long, let us put an end to this book here.

HERE ENDS THE THIRD BOOK

NOTES

(1) Not all of these classifications would be approved by a modern grammarian — I mean not even in Latin, which this list was of course intended for rather than English.

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HERE BEGINS THE FOURTH BOOK

CHAPTER 6

VERSE 1

And when the Lamb had opened one of the seven seals, I heard one of the four living creatures, as it were the voice of a great thunder, saying: Come, and see. The opening of a **seal** is the revelation of a mystery. Now since there is not one, but many mysteries, and it would be long to speak about every one of them individually, all of them can be encompassed in three kinds, namely one kind pertaining to speech, one pertaining to cognition, and one pertaining to action. Speech includes in itself all commandments. Cognition, when applied according to the rules, teaches us the forms of understanding. As for action, it is in harmony with both. After **one of the seven seals** has been opened, **one of the four living creatures** invites John, in the manner **of a great thunder**, to **come and see**, because, after the truth has been manifested, the Church that precedes, consisting of the apostles, calls to faith the one that follows.

VERSE 2

And behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow. By the **white horse** is represented Christ's humanity, free of all dark stain of sin, which the Father's Word wanted to govern alone; or it is all the elect. By the **bow** are represented the Old and the New Testament, from which

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come as many darts as there are words in the Testaments. It is said about this **bow** to the same rider, *stretching and extending thy bow over the sceptres*. [Variant of Hab. 3:9, close to the LXX version.] As for what follows, **and there was a crown given him**, it does not only refer to the Head, but also to the body. **And he went forth conquering that he might conquer**. Where did he come forth from but from the open seal? For from the revealed mystery of the Scriptures, the very truth of the mystery appeared manifestly. The Head came **forth conquering** first, so that he might afterwards **conquer** daily through the body the temptations of the Devil and the persecutions of evil people.

VERSE 3

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature, saying: Come, and see. What does it mean that a similar order is given in a dissimilar situation, if not that concern for the future struggle is here given in the same way as joy for the achieved victory was above?

VERSE 4

And there went out another horse that was red: and to him that sat thereon, it was given that he should take peace from the earth. The **red horse** is the body of the old enemy, that is all the reprobates, blood-red due to their killing of souls. While the rider of the elect says, *My peace I give unto you*, [John 14:27] the rider of the reprobates takes **peace from the earth**, because the former is the

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author of concord, while the latter is the author of discord. Note also that he takes **peace** not from heaven, but **from the earth**, that is from those who seek earthly things. **And that they should kill one another**. It is not a fleshly but a spiritual killing that should be understood in this sentence. As for how the reprobates are to **kill one another**, it is disclosed when it is said after that about the prince of the Jews, **and a great sword was given to him**, that is a spiritual and evil **sword** with which not the bodies, but the souls of the reprobates are killed. The Devil uses this **sword** in two ways: he either deceives people by himself on the inside with a spiritual speech or achieves the killing of the soul by assailing them from the outside through the tongues of his fleshly servants. All this is said to have been given him, which means that it was permitted him by the just God who disposes everything.

VERSE 5

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying: Come, and see. And behold a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand. By the blackness of this **horse** is represented that hunger of the wicked by which they long to devour eagerly the body of Christ and to send it into the stomach of their evilness. Their rider has **a pair of scales in his hand** because he seeks to buy the lives of the good with temporal payments in order to be able to satiate his hunger and that of his people. He held this **pair of scales in his hand** when he offered one fruit to eat, and bought the whole world to cause its ruin. One should know indeed that the Devil first takes away the food that consists of hearing

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the Word of God, so that he may the more easily absorb people to increase his body when they suffer from starvation because they are deprived of spiritual food; whence the Lord says through the prophet, *Behold I will send forth a famine into the land: not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of God.* [Am. 8:11] Indeed the Lord does this by forsaking people, and the Devil by invading them. Yet how could those who are God's grain, wine, and oil, suffer from this famine? No; let the chaff, husks, and oil dregs suffer from it, and let them, who are worth no price, fall in with the **pair of scales**; not those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ; whence it is said soon after that:

VERSE 6

And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying: Two pounds of wheat for a penny, and thrice two pounds of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the wine and the oil. This voice sounded **in the midst of the four living creatures**, that is in the midst of the Church, when, after the nations had been united in faith, the divine power restrained the Devil from hurting the elect; as if he were told by mockery, "The rider of the white horse has chosen and purchased the **wheat, barley, wine, and oil for one penny**; and he has left for you the chaff, husks, and oil dregs." So one **two-pound** measure, which is made up of two *sextarii*, is the Church based on love of God and neighbor from the two Testaments. However we should understand here one Church consisting of the holy preachers or men of great merit, not of everyone in general. Indeed it is not without

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reason that **barley** is here mentioned after the **wheat**. Therefore let us take the **two pounds of wheat** as representing the new preachers of the Church, coming from two peoples, and men more outstanding in virtues, who, after being shattered by the mill of tribulations and cooked by the fire of persecutions, have deserved to become a beautiful white bread for Christ. Let us take thrice **two pounds of barley** as representing the lives of the inferiors and weak from both peoples. Note also that the price of the **wheat** and of the **barley** is the same, because even though the work of the saints is unequal, they were nonetheless bought for the same price, and they will receive the same **penny** after their work. [Ref. Matt. 20:1-16] Furthermore, it should be noted that the same idea is repeated when it is said afterwards **See thou hurt not the wine and the oil**. How indeed could the Church not be **wine and oil** when it is trodden like a grape in the wine press of oppressions and dissolved as a crushed olive in the oil press of straits?

VERSES 7- 8

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature, saying: Come, and see. And behold a pale horse, and he that sat upon him, his name was Death, and hell followed him. The people represented by the **pale horse** are the same as those represented by the red horse, their spiritual **death** being now symbolized by the pallor of the horse. It is right to say that **death**, that is the Devil intending to fight against the living, sits on them, because he seeks to extinguish the lives of the elect by the agency of those he has already killed spiritually. **Hell** means those in whom **death** dwells.

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Therefore **hell** follows **death**, because the wicked imitate the Devil. We may also understand by the **pale horse** the heretics specifically. **And power was given to him over the four parts of the earth, to kill with sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.** There are two parts in this world, namely Christ's and the Devil's; but Christ's part is not divided, according to this: *One is my dove*; [Song 6:8] whereas the Devil's part is divided into four parts: pagans, Jews, heretics, and bad Catholics. Therefore there are as many plagues as there are parts of the Devil. It has already been explained how he **kills with sword**, with **famine**, and with **death**. As for the beasts, by them are represented ungoverned pulsions. So our enemy kills the souls of the reprobates with beasts because when fleshly pulsions are not restrained by the cages of the divine commandments, they are made wild, so to speak, by the impulse of diabolic incitement, and hurl the lives of the wretched down every precipice.

VERSE 9

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar of God the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. By **the souls of the slain** we understand the souls of all the elect, who are oppressed with either physical or spiritual attacks from the reprobates; for there are two kinds of martyrs: one apparent, the other hidden. By **the altar** we understand Christ: we offer on him our sacrifices to God the Father when, imitating his only begotten Son, we appear in his sight as a living sacrifice. Therefore **the souls of the slain** are under the altar because they are under our

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Mediator; but if by **the altar** we understand the elect themselves, they are under themselves, because they have not yet been clothed in immortality of the body.

VERSE 10

And they cried with a loud voice, saying: How long, O Lord (holy and true) dost thou not revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? What does it mean that the souls of the saints ask for **revenge for their blood** about the persecutions, if not that they are waiting for the day of the last judgment? It is not by the stomach being drawn by the gullet that the words of the souls are formed, but their great cry is a great longing. However, since a mind that is asking for something is generally moved in a different way from a mind that is asked for something, and since the souls of the saints cling to God in such a way that they rest in clinging to him, how can they be said to ask for this, while it is certain that they are ignorant of neither the will of God nor things that will happen? One should know then that the reason why they are said to ask something from him while they are in him is not that they long for a revenge because it is in disagreement with the will of him whom they see, but they receive from him himself the task to ask from him what they know he wants to do.

VERSE 11

And white robes were given to every one of them one; and it was said to them, that they should rest yet for a little time, till the number of their fellow servants, and of their brethren, who are to be slain, even as they,

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should be filled up. What is meant by the white **robes** but the reward of martyrs? Indeed, before the resurrection, the elect are said to have received one robe each because so far they enjoy eternal happiness only in the soul. Note also that the words of the souls are what lovers desire; then it is the role of God to reply that they should wait for their brethren to be gathered together, and it is theirs to willingly instill the patience to wait into their minds. So they are wishing for the resurrection of bodies, but they hear that they should wait willingly for their brethren to be gathered together.

VERSE 12

And I saw when he had opened the sixth seal: there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair: and the moon became as blood. By the **earthquake** we should understand the last persecution under the Antichrist. It is called **great** because, according to the Lord's saying, *there will then be a tribulation such as has never been, neither shall be.* [Matt. 24:21] The **sun** is Christ, according to this: *Unto you that fear God, the Sun of justice shall arise.* [Cf. Mal. 4:2] This **sun** will be darkened for the last people when those who looked as though they were shining in the body of Christ fall into the darkness of overt error. The **sun** may also indicate the shining life of those who preach. So in the last times **the sun will be as sackcloth of hair** because the shining life of those who preach will appear rough and despicable in the eyes of the reprobates. Indeed cilice is fit for criminals and sinners. By the **moon turned into blood** we recognize the holy Church stained in the elect by the **blood** of suffering. It is said to be entirely¹ stained because no one who remains in the faith of

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the Mediator will be immune from that last persecution; whence Joel says, *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood: before the great and manifest day doth come.* [Variant of Joel 2:31 close to the LXX version, where it is numbered 3:4]

VERSE 13

And the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree casteth its green figs when it is shaken by a great wind. **Heaven** is the Church of the saints, which, as it contains countless lives of saints, shines in the night of this life as if **stars** were radiating light on it from above. Therefore the **stars** falling from **heaven upon the earth** mean those who seem to stick to the faith or works of the saints rushing down to the iniquity of overt error out of love for the **earth**. This is also what is meant by **the fig tree casting its green figs**, for when all the Church is shaken by the last persecution, it is as if a **fig tree** were **shaken by a great wind**. Furthermore, another translation has “bitter green fig.”

VERSE 14

And the heaven departed as a book folded up. Just as the reprobates fall from the Church not physically but through their transgressions, so does the same Church, in its elect, depart from among the wicked not by a physical departure but by faith and work. Moreover it is right for the Church to be represented by **a book**, because it contains in itself the commandments for all heavenly life, not only written on parchments with a pen, but also written on the fleshly

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tablets of the heart by the Spirit of God. Note also that the **book** is said to be **folded up**, for just as no one can see what a **folded-up book** contains except those for whom it is voluntarily opened, so does the Church of the elect, in time of persecution, shut its innermost parts for strangers and discreetly open them inside for its people. **And every mountain, and the islands were moved out of their places.** By the **mountains** we should understand men of very high dignity who surpass others in words and virtues, about whom it is said, *I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains*. [Ps. 120:1] By **the islands** we understand people of lesser justice who still waver² in tribulations. So the fact that **mountains and islands** are said to have been **moved out of their places** is related to the above interpretation in which the Church of the saints departs by faith and work from the company of the wicked; for a familiarity with the wicked it was mixed with was a little like its place.

VERSE 15

And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains. The **kings** are those who govern themselves well. Likewise for **the princes**, who do not resist vices as well as **the kings**, but still do so as they can. Likewise, the **tribunes** have still less power than **the princes**, but they too nonetheless resist the Devil as they can. By the **rich** he means the rich in virtues, not in possessions; and by **the strong** also he means not the strong in body, but in mind. So these people, in the last

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persecution, presuming nothing of their virtues, **hide themselves in the caves and dens of mountains** because they seek the intercessions of saints, who are rightly called **mountains** because they are high in virtues and look down on earthly things, and rightly called **rocks** because they are strong, as they are necessarily strengthened in Christ, who is a rock. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *Then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains*; [Matt. 24:16] and Solomon, *The rabbit, a weak people, maketh its bed in the rock*; [Variant of Prov. 30:26] and Isaiah says, *They shall go into the holes of rocks, and into the caves of the from the face of the strength of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, when he shall rise up to strike the earth*. [Variant of Is. 2:19]³ He even tells us that one should do so, saying, *Enter thou into the rock, and hide thee in a pit in the ground*. [Ibid. 10] These things may also mean heavenly virtues, according to what we read in the book of Job: *She abideth among the rocks, and dwelleth among cragged flints, and stony hills, where there is no access*. [Job 39:28] But let us hear what the fleeing people say to either the angels or the saints.

VERSE 16

And they say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. As if they were overtly saying, “Bend your hearts with mercy, and protect us from the wrath of the judge with kind intercessions. Do not hide us from his face when he is having mercy, but hide us from his face when he is angry.” As for why they are so terrified, they also say it afterwards:

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VERSE 17

For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? As if they were saying, “If even a saint is terrified by the wrath of that God, who of us shall hold out?” We may disregard all that has been said about saints, and understand those things as referring to the reprobates: the mountains are the proud; the islands are the greedy (according to this: *Be silent, you that dwell in the island, the merchants of Sidon*); [Is. 23:2] the kings, princes, and tribunes represent the reprobates according to their qualities; by the rich he means those who need no help from others to do evil; by the strong he means the strong *at drunkenness*; [Ref. to Is. 5:22]⁴ by bondman he means bondman of sin; by freeman he means free of justice. There is no doubt that when the future judgment is imminent, all these will run to seek the help of demons as they are desperate and do not dare to come to any of the saints. This is indeed what is meant by their seeking hiding places in the dens and rocks of mountains; but how will demons defend others from the furious wrath when they will be the first ones to receive it? Finally, all this inspires listeners with great fear even if taken literally, but this is not a reason to violently reduce figurative statements to their literal meaning.

NOTES

(1) Cf. D-R, « the whole moon became as blood. » Although « whole » was not written in the version of the verse given in the comment (whether it was forgotten by the author himself or later by a scribe) the author obviously had it in mind.

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(2) The Latin verb I have translated here as « waver » has as its first meaning « to move in waves » or « to be carried by waves »; hence there is a wordplay between this first sea-related meaning (as actual islands are in the sea) and the figurative one of « wavering ».

(3) Variant of Is. 2:19. The Latin word used here for « strength » and the one used for « fear » in the standard Vulgate resemble each other a little, so we can easily imagine how those variants arose.

(4) Ref. to Is. 5:22. « At drunkenness » is how the Douay-Rheims bible translates the Latin phrase used here (*ad miscendam ebrietatem*); however it literally means « at mingling drunkenness ». The Latin verb for « to mingle » can also mean « to share » or « to stir up ». The Hebrew original (as a friend kindly told me; I do not myself know Hebrew) has something that means « mixing strong drink », as reflected in the KJV translation. It is hard to say how the author of our text himself interpreted the phrase, but it is likely that he had access to the Latin version only and not the Hebrew.

CHAPTER 7

VERSE 1

And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor on any tree. It should be noted that he seems to have kept the order all the way from the first to the sixth seal, but, omitting the seventh, he comes back to the beginning of Christ's incarnation and briefly recapitulates with different allegorical symbols the things he had already related, and then he concludes these same two narrations with the seventh seal. Recapitulation is not always done in this way, but in various ways. So what do we understand to be symbolized by the **four angels** but the

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body of the old enemy? It is because of the four principal kingdoms of the world, namely that of the Assyrians, that of the Medes, that of the Persians or Macedonians, and that of the Romans, in which the Devil reigned through the cult of idolatry, that **four angels** are put into the reprobate category. This is why Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue whose head *was of gold, but the breast and the arms of silver, and the belly and the thighs of brass, and the legs of iron*; [Dan. 2:32-33] for the kingdom of the Assyrians is symbolized by gold, that of the Medes by silver, that of the Persians or Macedonians by brass, and that of the Romans by iron. It is not surprising that bad people are symbolized by **angels**, since it was said about Judas, *One of you is a devil*. [John 6:71] One should also know that the **four angels** are the same as the **four winds**, according to the prophecy of Daniel, who says, *Behold the four winds strove upon the great sea, and four beasts, different one from another, came down out of the sea*. [Variant of Dan. 7:2] Indeed he indicates that the winds and the beasts are the same, that is the four aforesaid kingdoms. Therefore when the angels **hold the winds**, they necessarily hold themselves; and since all people of this kind are the Devil's body, he himself is also understood in them. So what does it mean that the **four angels held the four winds of the earth that they should not blow**, if not that the hidden enemy and his whole body united and bound themselves together, and blocked the mouth of everyone in such a way that no one dared to breathe out the word of truth against the cult of idolatry? By **the earth** is represented the diversity of provinces, and by **the sea** the numerousness of islands. The **trees** as well, since he has mentioned no genus, because of their diversity, symbolize the various offices of people.

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Now since they were being choked by the Devil, they were saved by the coming of their Lord. Whence it soon follows:

VERSES 2-3

And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying: Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads. Christ is an angel because we know he announced¹ the joys of the new life to the world, he about whom it is said, *angel of great counsel*. [Is. 9:6 acc. to LXX, where the verse is number 5.] The ascent **from the rising of the sun** meant here is the one by which, starting from the Resurrection itself, which sprang up like a new **sun**, he grew and filled up the whole world, and illuminated it with the evangelical teaching. With that voice he also prevented the noxious power of the four angels from doing harm, and destroyed it in both initiators and subordinates at the same time; whence Nebuchadnezzar also saw a stone cut out of a mountain without hands strike the aforesaid statue on its iron feet and break it in pieces. [Dan. 2:34] By this stone is represented the Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of Jewish stock without conjugal act, who struck the statue on the feet and made it fall, because he reached the extremity of the kingdom of the Romans with the preaching of the Word, and converted the aforesaid kingdoms of the world to rebuild them wholesomely. This same Mediator is said to have **the sign of the living God**, that is the mystery of the cross. By the fact that he says not “till I sign” but **till we sign**, he shows that there are in him

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many people through whom that mystery is being fulfilled. When he says **in their foreheads**, he indicates the inner forehead, for we smear both side posts with the blood of the Lamb, [Ref. to Ex. 12:5 et seq.] and it is no use for anyone to wear it on the outside if they do not also receive it on the inside, because *faith without works is idle*. [James 2:20 acc. to the Greek version.]

VERSE 4

And I heard the number of them that were signed, an hundred forty-four thousand were signed, of every tribe of the children of Israel. It is a definite number put for an indefinite one, and it does not refer only to the twelve tribes of Israel, but all the Church, in the elect, is represented by it. Indeed the number three is a perfect number in the sacred Scripture, especially because it represents the Trinity; same for the number four because of the four parts of the world, the four Gospels, or the four cardinal virtues: if we multiply these by each other, we reach the number **twelve**, which also is hallowed because of the twelve tribes or the twelve apostles. As for the number **thousand**, it represents totality, according to this: *unto a thousand generations*. [Deut. 7:9, 1 Chron. 16:15, Ps. 104:8] Therefore, since the Church is brought together from all nations by knowledge of the Trinity and nourished by the four books of the Gospels, it is appropriate for it to be symbolized by twelve thousand; but in order for it to be perfected in what it has believed in, the number twelve thousand needs to be joined together by the solidity of the cube: therefore, let twelve thousand be multiplied by four, and it makes forty-eight thousand; then, in order for it to

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reach what it has believed in, that is the contemplation of the Trinity, let forty-eight thousand be multiplied by three, and it gives a **hundred forty-four thousand**.

VERSES 5-8

Of the tribe of Juda, were twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Ruben, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Aser, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Nephthali, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Manasses, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Zabulon, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand signed: Of the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand signed. If we go back to the story of Genesis, we find the names of these introduced according to the birth of each of them, not at all in this order: for **Juda** is there put in the fourth place, here in the first; **Ruben** there in the first place, here in the second; **Gad** there in the eighth place, here in the third; **Aser** there in the ninth place, here in the fourth; **Nephthali** there in the seventh place, here in the fifth; **Manasses** there in the ninth place, here in the sixth; **Simeon** there in the second place, here in the seventh; **Levi** there in the third place, here in the eighth. Only **Issachar, Zabulon, Joseph, and Benjamin** are put in the same place here as there.² **Dan**, the fifth son of Jacob, is altogether excluded from this spiritual list. We easily find out why this was done if we stop concentrating on the birth of the flesh and search for their spiritual lineage in the names with their interpretations.³ So **Juda**

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translates to “confession” or “laudation.” What else does this name's interpretation indicate but the confession of sins and the praise of virtues? Though the word “confession” appears to be sometimes used for “praise,” whence the Lord, who had no sin whatsoever, said, *I confess to thee, O Father*, etc. [Matt. 11:25] By **Ruben**, which means “he who sees the child” or “they who see the child,” are represented the very works of virtues, for the fruit of good works is often symbolized by the word “children,” according to this: *Mayest thou see thy children's children*, [Ps. 127:6] which means the virtues born from your virtues. Then since works of virtues must serve the progress of others, he is rightly called “he who sees the child.” This means that we should show others the things in which we see we have progressed, according to this saying of the Lord: *that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*. [Matt. 5:16] It is therefore right for **Juda** to be put first and for **Ruben** to follow, because if we do not renounce bad actions through confession, we cannot be instructed for right and prescribed actions. So who would not see now that if he had begun with the firstborn in the flesh and put **Juda** in the fourth place, he would have been bound to confuse the spiritual lineage of the Church? Then, since those who do good works are usually always tested by temptation, it is right for **Ruben** to be followed by **Gad**, which means “temptation;” and since those who are girded with divine strength prove to be strong against temptation, it fits them well because the same **Gad** also means “girded.” Since we ought to direct the end of our good struggles towards God rather than towards the facade of human praise, the aforesaid **Gad** also means “robber,” as if he acquired secretly the goods of the

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heart to offer them to God in order that they may be approved, rather than exposed them to human eyes in order that they may be exalted. So since the tribulation inflicted on them tests the elect and crowns them after the test, it is right for **Gad** to be followed by **Aser**, which means “blessed;” and since the warriors of the Church, strengthened by the promise of blessedness, are prompted by feelings of love to spread even among the wicked, it is fitting for **Aser** to be followed by **Nephthali**, which means “wideness.” Since when they run through this greatest commandment of love, they both forget the things that are behind and stretch forth [Cf. Phil. 3:13] to the eternal riches that are to come, it is appropriate for **Nephthali** to be followed by **Manasses**, which is taken to mean “having forgotten” or “necessity:” “having forgotten” because he has only let go of what was behind, and “necessity” because he has not yet reached what he is stretching towards. Since their desire is often put off for a long time, it is right for **Manasses** to be followed by **Simeon**, which translates to “I have heard sorrow;” but those who hear sorrow must necessarily also hear “the name of the dwelling,” which **Simeon** also seems to mean, so that those who mourn in the tabernacle of decay should rejoice in the dwelling of eternal rest.

As for what kind of people all these are, it is indicated by the one listed next, **Levi**, which means “added;” for such people, going further than the general commandments, add many things that have not been ordered, like celibacy in holy virginity, and all other things of the kind: since these things are not ordered, but advised, it is necessarily the case that non-ordered things are being voluntarily added. It is

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quite fitting for these people that **Levi** is followed by **Issachar**, which translates to “reward,” because an exceptional and special reward is owed to those who do these things; whence Jeremiah says to one of them, *Let thy voice cease from weeping, and thy eyes from tears: for there is a reward for thy work, saith the Lord.* [Jer. 31:16] However, before people doing such things are rewarded, persecutions are usually inflicted on them, and test them, but do not overcome them. Therefore it is not without good reason that **Issachar** is followed by **Zabulon**, which means “dwelling of strength,” for any of these people becomes its dwelling when *power is made perfect in infirmity.* [2 Cor. 12:9] Then, since they freely expend the talent of the divine Word not only for their friends in time of peace, but also for their enemies in the very middle of persecution, it is fitting for **Zabulon** to be followed by **Joseph**, which means “increment;” for in order to make profit off the money they have received, they do not hesitate to expend it even for their enemies. Then, so that you should understand that all these are to be placed on the right hand of the eternal King, it is beautiful that **Benjamin**, which means “son of the right hand,” comes in the last place, as if he himself were the end of the sequence, where the happiness of the eternal reward is promised.

Therefore the holy Church is clearly shown to be, in **Juda**, praiseworthy through confession; in **Ruben**, fruitful in good works; in **Gad**, tested by the trials of temptations; in **Aser**, blessed after overcoming the temptations; in **Nephthali**, widened by love; in **Manasses**, forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forth to the things that are to come; in **Simeon**, as if it were so far sad in the valley

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of weeping, but rejoicing in hope at the dwellings of heavenly citizens; in **Levi**, beautiful in virginity and extremely abundant in pious mercy; in **Issachar**, resting on the expectation of the future reward; in **Zabulon**, crowned with martyrdom; in **Joseph**, enriched with the doubled talent of spiritual substance; and in **Benjamin** it is demonstrated to have been allotted the right hand, which is eternal happiness. However, let no one think that there are twelve vocations in the Church, since there are only three, namely the virtues of virgins, celibates, and good married people. Among all this, we should by no means omit the question of why Dan, who is undoubtedly a son of Jacob, is, whether in Genesis or in Exodus, counted with all his brothers, but was rejected from the spiritual list in this Apocalypse, while **Manasses**, who was born among strangers, and was indubitably not his son although he was adopted as his son, [Gen. 41:50-51 and 48:1-5] seems to have been substituted in the sixth place. So, “Dan” translates to “the judgment” or “the judging one of the Hebrews who go by.” What is this “judgment of the Hebrews who go by” but the rejection of the old priesthood? Therefore Dan, rejected from the spiritual list, teaches us by the very interpretation of his name that in the sixth age of the world the perfidious Jewish people was, by a mysterious but just judgment, altogether expelled from its place and lost the dignity of priesthood, while **Manasses**, that is the people of the Gentiles, gained by grace to be substituted in its place.

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VERSE 9

After this I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues. Here it is clearly revealed that the aforementioned number does not only consist of Jews, but of all the elect; for it is the same people that are indicated by the countless **multitude** and by the **hundred forty-four thousand signed**. This **multitude** is not countless for God, but for us; for he himself said, *I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand*. [Ps. 138:18] **Standing before the throne**. Although the countless **multitude** is itself the **throne** of God, it is nonetheless said to be **standing before the throne**, because the vision changes as it is obscured by symbols, although the thing represented by the symbols does not change at all. But does it mean something that this **multitude** is said to be **standing** whereas the same was described above as sitting with the ancients round about the throne? It clearly does: it is sitting when it examines the acts of others through some of its members, and it is **standing** when it strengthens its heart in the solidity of faith and love in all its elect. **And in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes**. What is represented by the **white robes** but their disposition of mind? These **robes** were not however **white** before the Lord's coming, because the hearts of mankind were besprinkled with the stains of original sins. **And palms in their hands**. By the **palms** is represented victory, and by the **hands**, work. Therefore to have **palms** in one's **hands** means to triumph over the old enemy and the pleasures of the world.

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VERSE 10

And they cried with a loud⁴ voice, saying. We understand here not a cry of the body, but of the heart: this great¹ **voice** is a great feeling of devotion, because one cries with their **voice** more the more they love God. **Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.** The order can also be, “To our God, and to the Lamb who sitteth upon the throne, salvation.” The person of the Holy Spirit is also understood in them, according to the rule already mentioned. Note also that they show with a wonderful way of speaking that there is one substance and two persons in the Father and the Son. Moreover, one should know that, as they ascribe all their **salvation to God**, the doctrine of Pelagius and Caelestius is gotten rid of, who uphold free will to such an extent that they say people can be saved without the grace of God.

VERSES 11-12

And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the ancients, and the four living creatures; and they fell down before the throne upon their faces. The **angels** as well as **the throne and the ancients**, and also the **living creatures**, symbolize the Church. Therefore he symbolizes one and the same thing in various ways: for since Christ alone reigns and judges in the Church, it is right for all the saints to be symbolized by one **throne**; since the Church itself also examines the acts of others, it is appropriate for it to be symbolized by **ancients**; and since it is sticking to the green pastures of the paradise, still only by faith in some of its members, and already enjoys them by sight in some

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other members, it is right for it to be symbolized by animals.⁵ Then, since it announces all things to come in its preaching, it is fitting for it to be symbolized by **angels**; and since it is brought together from various nations, it is right for it to be symbolized by a multitude. So **they fell down upon their faces before the throne**, that is, in the secret of their minds, where the inner judge sits. **And adored, saying: Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever.** All these things correspond well to the Trinity.

VERSES 13-14

And one of the ancients answered, saying to me: These that are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they? As no question preceded, what does it mean that one of the ancients is said to have answered? It is a habit of the sacred Scripture to use this verb like that, but it does not seem to have any meaning, so neither is ignorance of it harmful nor is knowledge of it praiseworthy. So, by this one **ancient** we understand the unity of the preachers of both Testaments, or him who is more ancient than ancients, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, who interrogates John in order that the latter may himself ask, and, after asking, hear, understand, and rouse himself up to imitate. By the **white robes** we understand both purity of mind and the glory they will be granted in the future. When John responds to this, in the person of good listeners, **My Lord, thou knowest**, the **ancient** replies, in the person of the Lord or of his good preachers, **These are they who are come out of great tribulation**, etc. In **are come**, three

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tenses are contained: it is here used for “are come, are coming, and are to come.” Therefore, since the whole number of the elect is defined by this sentence, it is greatly to be feared that if someone comes from somewhere else, they should not belong to the fellowship of the elect. The tribulations of the just, as the Psalmist says, are many; [Ps. 33:20] and among these tribulations there is that general one which consists of the fact that none of us knows whether they belong to the fellowship of the elect, as Solomon attests, who says, *Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred: but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come.* [Eccles. 9:1-2] **And have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** All the elect make **their robes white in the blood of the Lamb**, that is to say they beautify their disposition of mind in the sufferings of Christ and prepare it to receive the future joys.

VERSE 15

Therefore they are before the throne, and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he, that sitteth on the throne, dwelleth over them. As if he were saying, “The same people are the **throne** of God and **his temple** because we see they are clothed in this kind of garments and have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.” Note also that he does not say “dwelleth in them” but **over⁶ them** in order to show that they are **the throne** and the **temple** at the same time. By **day and night** he means in success and in adversity.

COMMENTARY/CHAPTER 7

VERSES 16-17

They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life. They suffer no trouble, because **the Lamb** rules them. Now where is he **leading them to**, but **to the fountain of waters**, that is to the Trinity, which is signified by a fountain? And by what way, but himself? For he himself said, *I am the way*. [John 14:6] It should also be noted that it is one and the same **fountain** that takes away **hunger** because it is the living bread, and **thirst** because it is the drink **of life**; for, as the apostle says, *God will be all in all*. [1 Cor. 15:28] So **the fountain** is said to be one because of the unity of nature of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and it is presented as a fountain **of waters** so that the multiplicity of God's gifts in the saints may be expressed by this phrase. So the person who is led to this satiety of **water** by **the Lamb** as the latter rules them, suffers neither **sun** nor **any heat**, because they are not burned by the **heat** of vices. **And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.** What a wonderful tenderness! He shows himself a father, as well as a mother, as he **wipes away** the **tears** of his bewailing children; whence Isaiah justly says, *For thou art our father, and Abraham hath not known us: thou, O Lord, art our father*. [Is. 63:16] Now what are these **tears**? The fact that one person bewails the evil they have done, another the fact that they have not done good, and many other similar things. These **tears** of his children are to be **wiped away** when they are back from exile to their fatherland.

COMMENTARY

NOTES

- (1) « Angel » is, via Latin, from Greek ἄγγελος (angelos) meaning « messenger ».
- (2) See Gen. 29:32-35, 30:1-24, 35:18, 41:51. I have translated the text as it stands, but there seems to be some confusion in there. The order is actually Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Juda, (Dan,) Nephthali, Gad, Aser, Issachar, Zabulon, Joseph, Benjamin, Manasses.
- (3) Many of the Church Fathers would seek the etymology of names of each patriarch, understanding the names to have an allegorical meaning.
- (4) A « loud voice » in Latin is literally a « great voice ».
- (5) The same Latin word can translate to « animal » or « living creature ».
- (6) The same Latin word can translate to « over » or « on ».

CHAPTER 8

VERSE 1

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour. Heaven, as we have often said, means the Church, which produces, as it were, **silence** for God when, through some of its members, it departs from the abundance of material things to seek the retreat of inner contemplation; but because this **silence** cannot be perfect in this life, it is said to have lasted **as it were for half an hour**. Note also that he ended the recapitulation where he said, *After this I saw a great multitude*, [Rev. 7:9] and now he concludes the narration with **the seventh seal**.

COMMENTARY/CHAPTER 8

VERSES 2, 3, and 4

And I saw seven angels standing in the sight of God; and there were given to them seven trumpets. And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer. In this place he upsets the order of the narration and interposes something; for, as the following will show, the **angel** with the **censer came and stood before the altar** before they received the **seven trumpets**. He interposes something because he introduced this **angel** with the **censer** in the middle before he had finished talking about the others. So, what do we understand by the **seven angels** but the holy Church in its preachers, who are the announcers of eternal life? It is also right for them to be said to be **seven** in number, because they are filled up with the sevenfold Spirit, or because they are put in charge of the totality of believers. They are said to be **standing in the sight of God** because they have trodden earthly desires underfoot and stick to divine contemplation. What is shown by their **seven trumpets** but the perfect preaching of the Old and of the New Testament? According to this: *Lift up thy voice like a trumpet*. [Is. 58:1] By the fact that it is the office of a priest to stand by the altar and burn incense prepared with spices, we realize that this **angel** is the Mediator between God and men, the Angel of the **seven angels**, and, so to speak, the Pontiff of the seven priests, he about whom the prophet said, *angel of great counsel*. [Is. 9:6 acc. to LXX, where the verse is number 5.] From this we clearly gather that he came before the **seven angels** received the **trumpets**. By the **altar** are represented the elect, in whom a spiritual sacrifice is being performed. So, the **angel came** by the flesh, **and stood** by the divinity.

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Also, what is represented by the **censer** but Christ's humanity? It is appropriate for it to be called **golden**, because the flesh assumed by the Word of God is, together with him, the wisdom about which it is said, *Take wisdom as gold*. [Variant of Prov. 16:16] The **censer**, in which spices are burned, may also symbolize the Church, which says every day, kindled by the fire of divine love, *Let my prayer be directed as incense*, etc. [Ps. 140:2] Then it is rightly said after that concerning Christ alone: **And there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel**. Just as smoke comes out of burned spices, so is the virtue of devotion produced by zeal for prayer. However, in order for the **incense** to become pleasing to God, it is given to the angel, which means that the zeal of **prayers** is entrusted to our Redeemer. The body is totally unable to speak to God but by the agency of the Head. The fact that the **incense** is offered on **the golden altar** shows that the sacrifice of **prayers** is accepted by him nowhere else but in the body of Christ, all of which shines with the wisdom of the divine Word. Note also that the **throne** and the **altar before the throne** do not signify two Churches, but one, just like Noah's ark and the eight souls in it. [Cf. Gen. 6; 1 Peter 3:20]

VERSE 5

And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth. The angel took the censer when the Lord joined human nature to himself

COMMENTARY/CHAPTER 8

within the Virgin's womb; or we may take it as referring to the body, when he first chose his disciples in Judea. Since **the angel, the censer, and the altar** are one body, we should understand the **censer** being said to have been **filled with the fire of the altar** as if he were saying, "Both the Head and the body have been kindled with no other fire but their own, that is the Holy Spirit." Then he **cast it on the earth**, that is, he brought it into this pagan people; whence it is fittingly said after that, **And there were thunders and voices**, that is terrors caused by preachings, **and lightnings**, that is miraculous signs, **and an earthquake**, that is persecutions.

VERSE 6

And the seven angels prepared themselves to sound the trumpet. What does it mean that the holy teachers **prepare themselves to sound the trumpet**, if not that they carefully study the divine Scriptures in order to know what they should speak about to whom, and how? Therefore the reader should be warned that in the following he should not understand **seven angels** more than one, but always recognize the **seven** in each of them, although he finds them divided into **seven** because of the figurative contents of the sayings, which cannot be recounted with one angel.

VERSE 7

And the first angel sounded the trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and it was cast on the earth, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. By **hail** is

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represented the wrath of God Almighty, according to this: *The wrath of the Lord is like hail coming down.*¹ By **fire** is indicated jealousy or hatred, and it is right to say that it is **mingled with blood**, because, according to John's saying, *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.* [1 John 3:15] The Lord promises through Isaiah that the Church cannot be burned by this fire, saying, *When thou shalt walk through fire, thou shalt not be burnt, and the flame shall not burn in thee.* [Is. 43:2] Moreover it should be noted that when he says the **third part** perished, we should not think that two parts consisting of the elect remained, which would contradict this: *Many are called, but few are chosen.* [Matt. 22:14] Indeed this number does not seem to pertain to literal quality, but to figurative quantity, and this is shown by the very change that says in one place that two thirds came into the lot of the reprobates, in another place that it was three thirds, and in a third place one third. What is more, above he divided the whole body of the Devil into four parts, now in two thirds, then in three, then in one; but one **third** is not smaller than two or three; for when he divides the Devil's body into four parts, he wants us to understand one part in the Church, consisting of false brothers, and three outside, namely the heretics, the Jews, and the pagans. When he divides the whole body into three thirds, we should understand one onefold part inside consisting of the wicked faithful, one twofold part outside consisting of the Jews and heretics, and also one onefold part outside, consisting of the Gentiles. When he symbolizes one part of the body by the same tripled number three, making two parts in all out of the three thirds, he wants us to understand there both hidden and overt heretics. There remains one third inside and outside, which retains in

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itself the symbols of all. When he divides the Devil's body into two thirds, he wants us to understand one onefold third inside consisting of bad Christians, and one threefold third outside consisting of the Jews, heretics, and pagans. One should also know that the **earth** is the same as the **trees**, that is the sum of the wicked encompassed in two thirds, one of which is onefold, and the other threefold: for sinners are the **earth** because they seek earthly things, and they are **trees** because they sway to and fro in their instability. About these it is said by Jude, *These are trees of the autumn, unfruitful, plucked up by the roots, twice dead.* [Jude 12] So two thirds are burned up by the sending of **hail and fire with blood**, and one is left unharmed by this, because, as the wrath of the heavenly Judge increases and the society of the old enemy is not gathered together by the preaching of the saints, this society is put on fire by the flames of its own hatred, whereas Christ's congregation is harassed by the hatred of the wicked, but it is not consumed by it. As for what is said after that, **All green grass was burnt up**, it seems to be a repetition of the same idea: all **green grass was burned up** in the two thirds; **all green grass**, that is the said part of the wicked, consumed by the flames of its own hatred. The greenness of **grass** indeed signifies here the enticements of the flesh, according to this: *All flesh is grass*; [Is. 40:6] whence, on the other hand, it is told that the crowds fed by the Lord sat *upon green grass*, [Mark 6:39] which means that they subdue the pleasures of the flesh by repressing them.

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VERSES 8- 9

And the second angel sounded the trumpet: and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood: and the third part of those creatures died in it, which had life, and the third part of the ships was destroyed. The Devil is called **a great mountain**, whether because he wanted to be like the one about which it is said, *In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared*, [Is. 2:2] or because in the end he will exalt himself above all that is called, or worshipped as, God. [2 Thes. 2:4] He is called **burning** because he is tormented by his own evilness and envy, because, ejected from among the saints by the **angel sounding the trumpet**, that is by the Church preaching, he is cast into the **sea**, that is into the incredulous — not that he was not already in them before, but since he has been ejected from among the saints, he starts ruling over the incredulous all the more. It seems that by the **third** that was **turned into blood** is symbolized the kind of death by which the two other thirds die, so that in one **third** is denoted the death, and in two thirds the number of the dying. The **water turned into blood** is fleshly wisdom, which kills souls; whence the apostle: *Being wise according to the flesh is death*. [Variant of Rom. 8:6] This wisdom means both bad credulity and wrong work; for with regards to wrong doctrine it is said, *The letter killeth*, [2 Cor. 3:6] and with regards to wrong work, *Deliver me from bloods*. [Ps. 50:16]

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VERSE 10

And the third angel sounded the trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, as it were a burning torch. The Devil is called a **star**, whether because of the rank he first had or because he *transformeth himself into an angel of light*; [2 Cor. 11:14] **a great star** because he was given precedence over all other angels, and **a burning torch** because of the fervor of his evilness. We should not understand this **fall** to be the one when he was first ejected from the heavenly abodes, but the one when he was excluded from among the elect by the **angel sounding the trumpet**, that is by the Church preaching; for heaven is the Church, which the Lord inhabits by presiding over it. **And it fell on the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters**, that is upon human nature, which flows by from its birth with the currents of carnal pleasures and thus runs down to death.

VERSE 11

And the name of the star is called Wormwood. Because the Devil withdrew from the sweetness of truth to turn into the bitterness of falsehood, it is right for him to be allotted the name of **Wormwood**. Then, since a great many people perish from the examples of the wicked, it is fittingly said after that, **and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter**. Indeed when fleshly men perish spiritually for having been enticed by the doctrines of wicked people or the examples of their works, it is as if they **died of bitter waters**.

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VERSE 12

And the fourth angel sounded the trumpet, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so that the third part of them was² darkened, and the day did not shine for a third part of it, and the night in like manner.

By **the sun, the moon, and the stars** is symbolized the Church, and their **darkness** refers particularly to the perfidy of the heretics. Although two parts are made out of three thirds, namely one part belonging to the **day** with **the sun**, and another belonging to the **night** with **the moon and the stars**, the two nonetheless make one, or one is subdivided into two. He does this in order to indicate its overt error by **the day**, and its hidden error by the **night**, that is, respectively, the public conflicts of the heretics and their secret machinations. The reason why it is not said “the third part was smitten and darkened” but **the third part was smitten so that it might be² darkened** (in due time), is that it is when they are openly separated from the Church that the heretics are truly **darkened**; for before that they are, as it were, hiddenly wounded. They are smitten out of the light of faith and the brightness of the divine Word. This destruction should not be ascribed to God, but understood in the same way as Pharaoh's heart being hardened. [Ex. 4:21; 7:3, 13, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8]

VERSE 13

And I beheld, and heard the voice of one eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice:

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Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth: by reason of the rest of the voices of the trumpets of the three angels, who were yet to sound the trumpet. John as well as the **eagle** and the **angels** bear the symbol of the Church. It is right for the Church to be called **one eagle**, because it is based on unity of faith and lifts itself up towards heavenly things after treading earthly pleasures underfoot. So in John it is the Church that sees itself; in the **eagle** it is the Church that flies; and in the **three angels** it is the Church that announces the evils to come in the last times. Note also that in a spiritual vision, seeing is the same as hearing. By the fact that the **eagle** is said to lament not because of the preceding **voices** but because of those of the following **angels**, it is shown that the Church laments and proclaims the future plagues of a different calamity at different times. It laments in the **eagle** and proclaims in the **angels**. Then it is said to **fly through the midst of heaven** because it possesses the world on either side, and its preaching is called a **great voice** because it has resounded in the whole world.

NOTES

(1) Possibly from a variant of Is. 30:30 acc. to LXX, which says, « And the Lord shall make the glory of his voice to be heard, and shall shew the furor of his arm, with furor, and wrath, and devouring flame of fire; he shall hurl lightnings, violently, and like water, and hail coming down with force. »

(2) « So that it was darkened » and « so that it might be darkened » are said the same in Latin.

COMMENTARY

CHAPTER 9

VERSES 1- 2

And the fifth angel sounded the trumpet, and I saw a star fall from heaven upon the earth, and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss. And he opened the pit of the abyss: and the smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace. What is represented by the **angel** and the **star** has already been said. By **the abyss** are symbolized the hearts of the wicked, darkened by the darkness of errors. By **the pit of the abyss**, we should understand preachers of errors, for if the mouth of an **abyss** is a **pit**, it is right to symbolize by the **pit** those through whom the iniquity of the wicked pours out the venoms of its heart. By **the key of the pit** is represented temporal power, with which the old adversary unlocks the mouths of the reprobates so that they may speak wrong doctrines, and it is right for these doctrines to be compared to **smoke** because they turn the light of truth into darkness for themselves, and even seem to darken the brightness of faith in others. As for the **great furnace**, it is the Antichrist's persecution, out of which comes **smoke**, that is wrong doctrine, to turn the souls of those who perish into darkness. However, how can it be said that this **smoke** is similar to that of a **great furnace** whereas the Lord says concerning that tribulation, *There shall be then great tribulation*, etc.? [Matt. 24:21] One should know then that it is not on account of torments or false doctrines that that tribulation is said to be more terrible than all the others (among which is this “similar” one) but on account of miraculous signs through which it will deceive people more

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easily. **And the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit.** See, the **fifth angel** says that what the fourth had foretold would happen with the sun, the moon, and the stars, has already happened with the sun and the air.

VERSE 3

And from the smoke there came out locusts upon the earth. It is fitting for the heretics to be represented by **locusts**, for just as we see **locusts**, neither flying perfectly like birds nor walking by steps, but making leaps, chew up the crops of the earth, so do the heretics, having neither the flight of full knowledge nor the walk of perfect work, but only moved by the leaps of pride, kill the souls of the wicked by preaching unheard-of things. So **locusts** come out of **the smoke** when heretics are born from heretics. **And power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.** The **power of scorpions** is in the tail, which is at the end of the body: so is temporality left behind as it withdraws from itself; for everything that passes is, as it were, behind, while everything that remains is before. So the **locusts** receive power to hurt as the **scorpions of the earth** because the heretics, sustained by temporal powers, hurt only with what is behind.

VERSE 4

And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree: but only the men who have not the sign of God on their foreheads. This is repeating the same idea as above, where the angel ascending from the rising of the sun commanded

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the four angels, who are now understood in the locusts, not to hurt the earth and the sea or the trees: for by the grass, which is not the food of men but of animals, are represented the little ones in Christ, the kind of people about whom the apostle said, *The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God.* [1 Cor. 2:14]¹ By **green things**, a great many of which are commonly used as food by men, are represented those who are progressing in faith and are in some way more fit to desire the green things of the paradise. By the **trees** are represented the strong who are rooted with some stability among the winds of temptations. Why are the locusts forbidden from hurting **any green thing** or **any tree**? By the whole we should understand a part, which is preserved from that hurting. Then **the men who do not have the sign of God on their foreheads** are those who are not strong in the faith that works through love.

VERSE 5

And it was given unto them that they should not kill them; but that they should torment them five months yet. If those who do not have the sign are reprobates, how can the locusts be forbidden from killing them? And can it be that those who do not have the sign of God are alive? Therefore it is implied that this refers to the previous sentence. So let us take **It was given unto them that they should not kill them; but that they should be tormented five months** to mean that the heretics cannot deceive the signed, but only test them by tormenting them in this life, which is ruled by the five senses. What follows corresponds well to them: **and their torment was as the torment of a**

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scorpion when he striketh a man. Which means that the elect, who despise the things that are behind and stretch forth to the things that are before, [Cf. Phil. 3:13] are believed to be afflicted by others by means of what they themselves have visibly rejected out of contempt for the world, that is by means of either secular power or the error of bad credulity.

VERSE 6

And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it: they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them. The days in question run all the way from the Lord's coming to the end of the world. Indeed the elect **seek death** when they want to stick to God through a retired way of life; but **death flies from them** because they are bound either by the indissoluble chain of a responsibility of government or by that of an inferior status.

VERSES 7-8

And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle: and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold. It is right for the heretics to be represented by **horses** because of their rapidity in running about. They are **prepared unto battle** against those about whom it is said in Habakkuk, *Thou sentest into the sea thy horses, stirring many waters.* [Hab. 3:15. acc. to LXX] However, since, by God's favor, they do not win, they are not said to have **crowns**, but **as it were crowns**, as if it were said, "They were neither crowns nor of gold, but some kind of invention of falsehood." **And their faces were as**

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the faces of men. And they had women's hair. The **faces** of the **locusts** being like human **faces** mean pretense of reason. As for **women's hair**, it is the effeminate manners of the heretics. Alternatively, by **faces of men**, we may understand males; and by **women's hair**, the sex itself; for heretics have also had **women's** support. **And their teeth were as of lions.** The **teeth of lions** usually bring a natural shame; by them is indicated the stench of the heretics.

VERSE 9

As for what follows, **And they had breastplates as breastplates of iron**, it indicates their hearts, which are hard and obdurate against the truth so that they may not be penetrated by the arrow of truth. **And the noise of their wings was as the noise of chariots, the noise of many horses running to battle.** By the wings of the locusts we understand the proud science of the heretics. It is fitting to say that the **noise** of these **wings** is like that of the **chariots** of **horses** that are **many** and run together **to battle**: the heretics both divide themselves with their doctrines and fight together against the Church.

VERSE 10

And they had tails like to scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. We have already spoken about **scorpions' tails**. Note also that the apostle calls sin a sting. [1 Cor. 15:56] We have already spoken about the **five months** in the above; but there he is talking about the good, and here about the wicked, because the locusts torment the people

COMMENTARY

mentioned in the previous passage, but do not kill them, whereas they do not torment the people mentioned here, but kill them when they hurt them, either with wrong doctrine or with temporal power.

VERSE 11

And they had over them a king, the angel of the abyss; whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon; in Latin Exterminans. The old enemy is not called the **king** of the wicked because he created them or leads them, but because he exercises the tyranny of his domination over them with God's just permission. Note also that, as already said, they are **the abyss**. So since he tries deceitfully to usurp the name of Christ for himself through the damned man, he is consequently mentioned by names in the three languages in which the authority of the Gospels attests that the Redeemer's name was written by Pilate on the title. [Luke 23:38 and John 19:19-20] However, since blessed Jerome, in his interpretation of Hebrew names,² does not say **Abaddon** but “Labaddon,” it is certain that it lost its first letter by the fault of scribes. It is also fitting for the Devil to be called **Exterminans**,³ because many people are banished from the boundaries of the elect and brought to the exile of eternal death because of him.

VERSE 12

One woe is past. That is, it preceded in the narration, or was actually fulfilled in the past. **Behold there come yet**

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two woes more hereafter. That is, in the narration, or they are actually to be fulfilled in the future.

VERSES 13-14

After these things the sixth angel also sounded the trumpet: and I heard the voice of one of the horns of the golden altar, which is before the eyes of God, saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet: Loose the four angels, who are bound in the great river Euphrates. The **altar** is the Church, and it is **golden** because it is illuminated by heavenly wisdom. Note also that the **altar is before the eyes of God** because *the eyes of the Lord are upon the just*. [Ps. 33:16] The **horns of the altar** are holy preachers, and by this one **horn** we understand the leader of preachers, that is Christ. He tells the **sixth angel** sounding the **trumpet**, that is, he proclaims to the Church, to **loose the four angels**, because he has granted it the power to bind and loose in heaven and on earth, according to this: *Whatsoever thou shalt bind*, etc. [Matt. 16:19] In the **four angels** we recognize the entire body of the reprobates, which consists of evil spirits and wicked men, of course separate in nature, but united in iniquity. Indeed the number **four** is frequently used to signify totality, whence it is said that in the end of the world the elect will be taken from the four winds of the sky by angels. [Matt. 24:31 and Mark 13:27] By **the Euphrates**, which is often mentioned with a negative meaning, is represented the worldly kingdom's power, hostile to Christ and the Church; and the old enemy is said to be bound in this power with his body because he is not permitted to do as much harm as he wants. So let us take **Loose the four angels who are**

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bound in the great river Euphrates as if the Church were told, “Loose both men in angels, and angels in men, and bear in mind how much you ought to endure the hardships of persecution with equanimity, since your enemies are not able to inflict them on you except by your own judgment, which is in your Head, which proclaims for you and in you, *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.*” [Matt. 28:18]

VERSE 15

And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year: for to kill the third part of men. The loosing of these **angels** represents the beginning of the last persecution. He says **prepared**, because the Devil is always waiting for the good's failure. By **an hour, a day, a month, and a year** we understand by *metalepsis* four times, namely three years and six months, during which that persecution will rage. The **third part of men** of which it is said that it will be killed consists of superiors and inferiors, that is of persuaders and persuaded, because the dead will kill the dead.

VERSE 16

And the number of the army of horsemen was twenty thousand times ten thousand. I heard the number of them. This **number** refers specifically to preachers of errors, but in such a way that the seduced people are also understood in the seducers. We see that this **number** coming against the number of the elect is both double and

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multiplied by two thousand; for it is said about the elect, *The chariot of God is ten thousands*, [Variant of Ps. 67:18] and about these people, **twenty thousand times ten thousand**. It is double, then, because it consists of evil spirits and reprobate men. There remains therefore for the twofold evil to be fought against by the onefold good.

VERSES 17-18

And thus I saw the horses in the vision: and they that sat on them, had breastplates of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone. These horses, that is preachers of errors, in whom the seduced people are also understood, have demons as riders, not to guide them, but to make them fall headlong. By the name of **breastplates** are symbolized the torments of the wicked, hard and impossible to get rid of with any prayer. By **of hyacinth** we should understand “of smoke,” for out of **fire** comes smoke. The very color of **hyacinth** also indicates this, as it has the appearance of air. **And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions.** The **heads of the horses** are initiators of errors, who are both strong at crushing the weak and full of bad smells; whence it is rightly said after that, **and from their mouths proceeded fire, and smoke, and brimstone.** By these **three plagues was slain the third part of men, by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.** This is because bad people's preaching prepares eternal torments for its followers, and these torments are metaphorically symbolized by this preaching, the effect being represented by the cause.

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VERSES 19, 20, and 21

The power of the horses is in their mouths, and in their tails. By the **mouth** is represented the knowledge of teachers, and by the **tail**, which should be placed behind, temporal power. So their **power is in their mouths and tails** because their way of preaching is to persuade people of wrong things; but as they are sustained by temporal powers, they are exalted through the things that are behind. **For their tails are like to serpents, and have heads: and with them they hurt.** Here, inversely, wicked teachers are represented by the **tails**, and secular power by the **heads**. It is fitting to say that bad preachers **are like serpents**, because it is with the voice of the one whose hiss Eve was allured by that they advise bad things. Since it is with the support of powerful people that they violently bring many people to do forbidden things, it is right to say that they have **heads**, which, according to another translation, are called dragons' heads. Then, in order to show that the Gentiles also belong to this body, he said after that, **And the rest of the men, who are not, and did not do penance from the works of their hands, that they should not adore devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: and did not do penance from their murders, nor from their fornication, nor from their thefts**, as if he were saying, "People of this kind also seem to belong to the aforementioned number."

HERE ENDS THE FOURTH BOOK

COMMENTARY

NOTES

(1) 1 Cor. 2:14. The same Latin word can translate to « animal » or « sensual ».

(2) *Tom. 3. Edit. Veronen. 1735. col. 118*

(3) Among the possible translations for this word is « banishing », which is the interpretation « chosen » by the commentator, but also « destroying », « exterminating », which corresponds to the meaning of the Greek « Apollyon », whereas « banishing » does not.

HERE BEGINS THE FIFTH BOOK

CHAPTER 10

Whereas throughout the other prophecies we find a great many things that correspond to our Mediator symbolized by earthly things and few by heavenly things, in this prophecy John has quite often represented his coming by an angel. To what end, if not to show that this prophecy is richer than others? Whence it is now said:

VERSE 1

And I heard another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. It is right for him to be called an **angel**, because he appeared to men as the new messenger of eternal life, about whom we read, *angel of great counsel*;¹ and to be called **strong**, because it is demonstrated that he overcame the aerial powers when he died, whence this: *the Lord mighty in battle*. [Ps. 23:8] When he says **another**, it does not mean that he is actually talking about something different, but it is the habit of

COMMENTARY/CHAPTER 10

recapitulation: he saw **another angel** because he repeated another vision. The **angel** appeared **clothed with a cloud** because it was clothed in the flesh that the Lord was seen among men, and his descent from heaven was precisely his adoption of the flesh. **And a rainbow was on his head.** The head of Christ, as the apostle says, is the divinity itself. [1 Cor. 11:3] By the **rainbow** is symbolized the reconciliation of the world that was achieved by the plan of the Word incarnate; its mystery was explained earlier. Note also that, having described the last struggle, and passing over the seventh seal, with which both the end of the consummation and the Lord's coming are expected to take place, he comes back to the beginning of Christ's incarnation, which has just been spoken about, and describes his preaching. Once this narration is finished, he comes back to the things he had left aside for a while. Let us however remember that when he has brought this narration to its end, the end needs to be joined to the broken order; for the passage where it is said, in the following, *The second woe is past*, [Rev. 11:14] implicitly refers to the one where, in the end of the previous book, we spoke of the destruction of the wicked horses and Gentiles. Note also that he behaves in an unusual manner in this narration, and delimits both narrations not with one end, but with two, because he distinguishes the interrupted order and the recapitulation separately, as will become apparent a bit later. **And his face was as the sun.** The angel's **face** is Christ's incarnation, by means of which he became known to mortals, and concerning which the Psalmist says, *Shew us thy face, and we shall be saved*. [Ps. 79:4] This **face** is not compared to **the sun** because of its brightness, in which it is incomparably greater than **the sun**, but because, like

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the sun, it had a rising in being born, a setting in dying, and again a rising in being resurrected; whence Solomon, *The sun riseth, and goeth down*, etc. [Eccles. 1:5] The **face** may also be understood to mean the saints. **And his foot as a pillar of fire**. The angel's feet are the preachers, thanks to whom God's wisdom incarnate has, so to speak, walked through the whole world. It is fitting for them to be compared to a **pillar** and to **fire** because they both bear the Church's edifice, which is laid upon them, and, kindled by the Holy Spirit, set the hearts of their listeners on **fire** to the love of God by their preaching.

VERSE 2

And he had in his hand a little book open. The angel's **hand** is the working of our salvation, that is Christ's incarnation. The **little book open** is the declared grace of the New Testament. Note also that if the angel's face had not shone first, he would not be holding the **little book open in his hand**, because it is in his plan that the whole sum of the Scriptures was revealed. **And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth**. In this sentence, a distinction is shown between preachers and between times: those who are, as it were, the **right foot**, are the stronger ones who are neither lifted up by success nor thrown down by adversity, and say, *The darkness thereof, and the light thereof are alike*. [Ps. 138:12] These are set **upon the sea**, that is, to endure the persecutions of the wicked. As for the **left foot**, it is those of lesser strength: as they are sent in time of peace, it is as if they were set upon the solidity of **the earth**. For just as a king sends his stronger men to face the enemy, so does Christ.

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VERSES 3- 4

And he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth. Just as the **lion's** cry inspires beasts with fear, so does Christ inspire beastlike men with fear by threatening through the holy preachers, according to this: *The lion roareth, who will not fear?* [Variant of Amos 3:8] **And when he had cried, the seven thunders spoke their voices.** The **seven thunders** signify the same thing as the **lion's voice**, namely the preaching of the Word, as in *The voice of thy thunder in a wheel*. [Ps. 76:19] Note also that **the seven thunders** are said to have spoken after the **lion's voice** because the sevenfold Spirit also taught the apostles to preach what the Lord taught, whence they are called *the sons of thunder*. [Mark 3:17] **They spoke their voices** because the holy doctrine does not receive the fables of the Jews or the rubbish of philosophers into its dogmas. However, a very complicated question arises for us in what is said after that: **And I was about to write the things which the seven thunders spoke: and I heard a voice from heaven, saying: Seal up the things which the seven thunders have spoken; and write them not.** If the holy preaching had not been written, how would it have come to us? It seems therefore that we should understand in this place only a specific kind of writing; for one should know that the reason why we shut something under **seal** is in order that it should not be open to all, but that it may be loosed in due time for those we trust; whereas what we write openly, we bring to the knowledge of all. Therefore we are ordered not to divulge the mysteries of God's words to everyone indiscriminately, but to supply them with measure and as though from under a **seal**, according to how

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able we see people are to receive them; and we are ordered to give milk to drink to some people, and solid food to others. [Ref. to 1 Cor. 3:1-2] The divine mysteries are also shut under a protective **seal** in order that they should not be disclosed to people who were not going to believe in them at all, because when they do not accept them, they start laughing at them.

VERSES 5, 6, and 7

And the angel, whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and he swore by him that liveth for ever and ever. When the Lord forbids swearing, what does it mean that he himself **swears**, if not that men are often mistaken in swearing, whereas he, who is the truth, is never mistaken? So, the **angel lifting up his hand to heaven** was our Redeemer carrying his humanity up to the Father's seat by his own power. His **swearing by him that lives for ever and ever** means that he shows that he, who is the Father's Word, and his flesh, which indicates the whole man, who consists of flesh and soul, are one person of God and the true God of man; or if it is not this, then certainly he **swears** by the Father because he attributes him everything. In what is said after that, **who created heaven, and the things which are therein; and the earth, and the things which are in it; and the sea, and the things which are therein**, he refutes the error of the heretics who are not afraid to claim that some things were made by the good prince and others by the prince of darkness. Now let us hear what he **swore**: **That time shall be no longer, but in the days of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the**

COMMENTARY/CHAPTER 10

trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets. The **seventh angel** and the seventh **trumpet** are the end of the Church's preaching, with the completion of which the second coming of the Lord is expected to take place. However, if time shall be no longer when holy preaching has come to an end, how can the Psalmist say, *Their time shall be forever?* [Ps. 80:16] One should know then that for the just, whom the eternity of immortality will receive, no time of changeableness will come after that; whereas the unjust, whom an eternal decline will take possession of, will be as if they were confronted with times of mutability: for, since time declines moment by moment, it is fitting for the decline of the wicked to be called by the name of time. Therefore the Psalmist affirms concerning the unjust what the Lord denies concerning the just. Finally, when he says that **the mystery of God shall be finished**, it is not meant in the sense of destruction, but in the sense of completion. He says that it was foretold by the **prophets** because nearly all their focus was on the Lord's first and second coming and the end of the world.

VERSE 8

And the voice which I heard again speaking to me, and saying: Go, take the book from the hand of the angel who standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth. The **voice** that ordered him above to seal the voices of the thunders for those who would not believe them or for little people, is now inviting the holy Church, in its preachers, to **the book** open. This **voice** is understood to be a spiritual one with which God instructs the hearts of preachers so that

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they may understand the manifest truth of the law and the prophets, which is shut, whether in the seven thunders or in the seven seals, for those who are doomed to perish altogether. The steps with which the holy Church goes to **the angel** are not physical, but spiritual; they are the mental desire by which it is seen to come closer to God. Then since the **voice** of **the angel** giving this order is followed by a most ready state of mind on the saints' part, it is rightly said after that:

VERSE 9

And I went to the angel, saying unto him, that he should give me the book. Then since the one who invites him to what he promised deceives no one, it is fittingly said after that, **And he said to me: Take the book, and eat it up.** To **eat up the book** means to store away understanding of the Scriptures in the recesses of one's heart. One should know indeed that the sacred Scripture is for us a food in its obscure passages, which cannot be swallowed down unless they are chewed by means of explanation, and a drink in its obvious passages, which we easily drink just as they are found, without explanation. This is why, although the holy preachers, in John's person, already understood that the revealed mysteries of the Scriptures were about the Lord, because they still needed explanations as to how they concerned him, it is not said about the book, "Take the book, and drink it," but **eat it up**, as if it were said, "Study it as if you were chewing it, and understand it, and then swallow it down." **And it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey.** The order is

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inverted, but it is found in the right order a little below, for there follows:

VERSE 10

And I took the book from the hand of the angel, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth, sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. It is right for the **mouth**, out of which preaching emanates, to represent those who meditate on God's law day and night and say with the Psalmist, *How sweet are thy words to my palate!* [Ps. 118:103] On the other hand, it is right for the **belly**, out of which excrements come, to represent fleshly people devoted to earthly pleasures, about whom the elect say, *Our belly cleaveth to the earth.* [Ps. 43:25] Therefore it is as if food came down through the **mouth** into the **belly**, when knowledge of the Scriptures comes through the Church's preachers even to those who live in a fleshly manner. This is why **the book**, which is **sweet** in the **mouth**, becomes **bitter** in the **belly**; for what can be more **bitter** to them than what the Lord commands, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor anything that is his?* [Deut. 5:21] Alternatively, the **book** is **sweet** in the **mouth** when eternal joys are promised in it to readers, like *The just shall shine as the sun*; [Matt. 13:43] but in the **belly**, that is in the secret of the mind, it is **bitter**, since one is confronted in it with strict commandments, like *Unless you become as this little child, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Variant of Matt. 18:3]

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VERSE 11

And he said to me: Thou must prophesy again to many peoples, and nations, and kings, and tongues. This is said to John specifically, and to preachers generally. They are ordered to **prophesy**, that is to preach, again, so as to proclaim again by their actions what they preach with their mouths.

NOTES

(1) See note (1) and following bracket note to 7:2-3.

CHAPTER 11

VERSE 1

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod, saying: Arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar and them that adore therein. He says this in the person of preachers in general. The **reed** represents metaphorically the divine preaching written by it, and it is called **like unto a rod** because holy preaching is not pliant but straight. **The temple of God** is the faithful, to whom it is said, *You are the temple of the living God.* [2 Cor. 6:16] **The altar in the temple** is the life of the religious among the people of the faithful, in whom the fire of holy devotion principally and continuously remains without declining. By **them that adore therein** he means in **the temple and the altar**,

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words by which they that adore therein are themselves represented. So, what does it mean to **measure the temple and the altar** with a **reed**, if not to bestow the grace of gifts through holy preaching? Which the Church certainly does in Christ, that is in its Head. Note also that he who must **measure the temple of God**, is told to **arise**, that is, to rise to high summits of virtues through the practice of work, so as to become higher than the building he is measuring.

VERSE 2

But the court, which is without the temple, cast out, and measure it not: because it is given unto the Gentiles.¹ He says **The court which is without, cast out** with the same way of speaking as when we order to **cast** someone out if someone knocks at the door and we do not want to let them in. What then do we understand **the court** to mean but the Jews, heretics and **Gentiles**? It is said to be **given unto the Gentiles** because they all pass into the number of the incredulous nations.¹ **And the holy city they shall tread under foot two and forty months.** The **holy city** is the temple and the altar, that is the heavenly Jerusalem, which is being built like a **city**. What does it mean, then, for the Church of the saints to be **trodden underfoot** by those who are without, if not to be persecuted with words and torments? **Two and forty months** signify *a time and times, and half a time*, [Rev. 12:14] that is the time of the Antichrist, yet also the whole time of this life because of its seven ages and the seven days that constitute its cycle; for six times seven make **forty-two**.² This is also what was signified by the fact that the children of Israel entered the

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Land of Promise at the forty-second mansion. [Num. 33:1-49]

VERSE 3

And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. Martyr Victorinus understands the two witnesses to be Elijah and Jeremiah, for he says that we nowhere read Jeremiah's death;³ but others interpret it better in thinking that they are Elijah and Enoch.⁴ Let us for our part understand a genus in the species; that is, by the two witnesses let us understand the Church; and a thousand two hundred forty⁵ days are not only the cycle of the time of the Antichrist, but also that of previous times. It is appropriate for the Church to be represented by two witnesses, because of the two Testaments, the two peoples, the two commandments of love, and the two kinds of martyrdom. By sackcloth we understand confession of humility or the saints' brightness despised by the wicked.

VERSE 4

These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, that stand in the sight of the Lord of the earth. The Church, whether in those **two** men or in all preachers in general, is represented by the **olive tree** because of the unction of the Holy Spirit, and by **candlesticks** because of the light of faith and work. While there is one **olive tree** and one **candlestick** made up of two peoples, they are called **two olive trees** and **two candlesticks** because of the two Testaments. They **stand in the sight of the Lord**

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because they stick to their Creator through inner contemplation. Hence Elijah, whom this is taken to refer to specifically, says, *The Lord liveth, in whose sight I stand.* [1 Kings 17:1] With another interpretation, this may refer to Elijah and Enoch specifically, who, taken away from human eyes, stick to God in secret.

VERSE 5

And if any man will hurt them, fire shall come out of their mouths, and shall devour their enemies. And if any man will hurt them, in this manner must he be slain. What is symbolized by **fire** but holy preaching kindled by the firebrands of the Holy Spirit? It is not surprising if preaching makes the wicked die, since the apostles says, *We are the good odour of Christ unto God in them that perish*, etc. [2 Cor. 2:15] Alternatively, **fire coming out of the mouths** of the witnesses kills **their enemies** because the Church strikes those who persevere in evil with the lightning of anathema. Alternatively again, we may understand by the whole a part which is burned so as to be changed for the better. So out of the Church comes a **fire** of brightness by which the wicked are changed for the better.

VERSE 6

These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy. What do we understand by **heaven** but the same thing as by the two witnesses, namely the holy preachers of the Church? When they **shut heaven that it rain not**, it is indubitably themselves that they **shut**.

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They **shut** themselves not so that they do not **rain** at all, but that they do not **rain** upon an earth that is thorny and very close to malediction. The limbs possess this power in the Head. **And they have power over waters to turn them into blood.** It is the sword of the letter, which the Church uses spiritually to pierce through the hearts of the elect to give their hearts life in the spirit, that makes this **blood** flow in the hearts of people who understand things wrongly. **And to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they will.** Every time they shut the divine mysteries to the faithful, they strike them with an incurable **plague**. On the other hand, every time they disclose God's mysteries to the faithful, they bring some to life, others to death. Note also that it is not said that they will have this **power**, but that they already have it, in order that we may understand that this is not said only about those two men but also about the present preachers.

VERSE 7

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that shall ascend out of the abyss, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. **When they shall have finished** means when they shall have reached the point at which they must **finish their testimony**, that is the time of the Antichrist. Whence it is clear that these things are happening before the last persecution; for due to the brevity of those days, about which the Lord says, *For the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened*, [Matt. 24:22] the Church's testimony is presented as if it were already finished when that time has been reached. Then **the beast**, that is the whole body of the

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Devil, is said to **ascend out of the abyss**, because it is given permission to speak by divine judgment; for the *judgments* of the Lord *are a great abyss*, [Ps. 35:7] therefore it **ascends** from where the permission for it to rise comes from. If on the other hand we understand by the **beast** the Antichrist alone, its ascent from the **abyss** is its carnal birth from the very deeply wicked people of the Jews, that it from the tribe of Dan. As for the fight, it will be both physical and spiritual. So in **and shall overcome them**, there is a certain part, mixed with the body of Christ, about which it is said that it can be **overcome**, either with threats or with flatteries. Hence the previous sentence by no means referred only to the two witnesses; for if it were the case (God forbid!) the **beast** would **overcome them**. Let us therefore understand these two as being in the part of the Church about which it is said, **and kill them**, that is in the elect part, which can be killed, but cannot be overcome.

VERSE 8

And their bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is called spiritually, Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord also was crucified. By the fact that the Church of the saints is described as lying dead **in the street of the great city**, it is shown that it has been strongly afflicted and spiritually laid under its enemies by God's judgment. Note also that we should understand here not only the **bodies** of those who are killed by the sword but also of those who are still alive, the kind of people about whom the apostle says, *for you are dead*, etc. [Col. 3:3] Since the persecution will be more cruel in Jerusalem, consequently the martyrdoms of the saints are said to take place there; and here it is

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shown that it is principally the Jews who will stick to the Antichrist, until those who must be saved are converted when Elijah and Enoch are preaching. That **city is called spiritually Egypt and Sodom** because of its imitation of them. Also, since that persecution will take place throughout the world, we may understand by this **city** the whole globe raging against the Church; for the Lord did not suffer his Passion inside that **city**, but outside its gates, so that he might be believed to have been **crucified** in the whole world, and to have taken possession of the whole world. By **Egypt and Sodom** is represented the iniquity of persecutors.

VERSE 9

And they of the peoples, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, shall see their bodies for three days and a half: and they shall not suffer their bodies to be laid in sepulchres. Just as graves protect bodies from human eyes, so do quiet times protect the saints from tribulation. Therefore since there will be no peace for the saints, consequently they are said to remain unburied. Let it look contradictory to no one if we have said that the dead men can be understood to mean not only the slain but also the afflicted, because he is metaphorically indicating the whole men by the **bodies**. So is the sum of three years and six months represented by the time of **three days and a half**: the whole is symbolized by a part.

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VERSE 10

And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry: and shall send gifts one to another, because these two tormented them that dwelt upon the earth. How they are **tormented** by them, we have explained a little earlier: by their devouring them with spiritual fire, stopping salutary rain, and turning waters into blood.

VERSE 11

And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them. And they stood upon their feet. In this place is declared the general resurrection of all the saints after that last persecution. The **spirit of life from God entering into them** does not mean that they will receive another spirit, but that they will get back the same that they had. **Standing upon** one's **feet** means not staggering with any changeableness of spiritual things any more. So, let us hear what happens to the reprobates when the saints awaken: **and great fear fell upon them that saw them.** It is not surprising if **fear** seizes the reprobates, since even the elect themselves will be scared, albeit with a serene fear.

VERSE 12

And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying to them: Come up hither. This **voice** is the one about which the apostle says, *The Lord himself shall come down from heaven with commandment, and with the voice of an*

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archangel, and with the trumpet of God. [1 Thess. 4:15] **And they went up to heaven in a cloud: and their enemies saw them.** They go up **in a cloud**, that is, in the power of him who judges. This is why the Lord, after subduing death, went up to the Father's seat **in a cloud**. As for what we said earlier, that the bodies of the two witnesses consisted of living and dead people, we bring here a suitable witness to confirm it, Paul, who says, *We who are alive, who are left, shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord.* [Ibid. 16] So if, as the apostle says, those who are found alive will be taken up in the clouds into the air to meet Christ, is the Psalmist then lying when he says, *Who is the man that liveth, and shall not see death?* [Variant of Ps. 88:49] And the book of Genesis when it says, *Earth thou art, and into earth thou shalt go?* [Gen. 3:19 acc. to LXX] No! For, as father Augustine says, at the very moment when they are taken up in the clouds, they will taste a momentaneous death. It is the same for the body to return into the earth and for the body to remain there when the soul leaves it, because the body is earth anyway. As for how quick both changes will be, the apostle indicates it, affirming that it will all happen *in the twinkling of an eye.* [1 Cor. 15:52]

VERSE 13

And at that hour there was made a great earthquake. After showing the resurrection, he recapitulates starting from the last persecution. It is not surprising if he calls the time shortened for the sake of the elect an hour, when he says elsewhere concerning all this time, *Little children, it is*

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the last hour. [1 John 2:18] Note also that he says it is a **great earthquake** because, according to the Lord's saying, *there shall be a tribulation such as hath not been from the beginning.* [Matt. 24:21] **And the tenth part of the city fell.** The **tenth part of the city** falls in those who do not belong to the number of the elect. The elect indeed, joining the nine orders of angels, make up for the fallen demons with their own multitude, and fill up the **tenth** place, which is that of their order. Therefore it is not the whole **tenth** that we should understand here, but a part of the **tenth**, which falls, that is the part which, not joining the nine orders of angels, by no means holds the place of the **tenth** order. **And there were slain in the earthquake names of men seven thousand.** By these we should understand the part that is now hiding among the lambs, but will be brought to publicly visible error when the last persecution takes place, and will be sent into the body of the beast to be devoured by it. **The rest were cast into a fear, and gave glory to the God of heaven.** Who are **the rest** he is talking about? Those who have remained in faith throughout? Or those who denied it, but came back to it afterwards? Or those who have been faithless, but will believe afterwards when Elijah and Enoch are preaching? We may actually understand all of these.

VERSE 14

The second woe is past: behold the third woe cometh quickly. This is the end of the double recapitulation, but **the second woe** does not belong to this recapitulation. Indeed it had been said earlier, after the battle with the locusts was finished, that one woe was past and two were to

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come; then, when all that pertained to **the second woe** had been told (with the loosing of the four angels etc.) **the second woe** was not mentioned again. The reason for this is that there followed the recapitulation starting from Christ's coming, and he did not want us to think, if **The second woe is past** had been said there, that **the third woe** referred to the recapitulation. Therefore the **second woe** does not refer to this passage, but to the one above: the recapitulation that broke the order being finished, **the second woe** is mentioned with reference to where the order was broken. As for what **the third woe** is, it is disclosed when it is said after that:

VERSE 15

And the seventh sounded the trumpet: and there were great voices in heaven. This **seventh angel sounds the trumpet** as the Lord appears for the judgment. By this **angel** we understand the Church, no longer preaching, but singing mercy and judgment for the Lord. This is why the angel standing upon the earth and the sea swears that time shall be no longer but the end will come with **the seventh trumpet**. **The great voices in heaven**, that is in the Church, are thanksgivings; and it is right to call them **great**, because a **great** desire is arising concerning great things. John shows where these voices come from, adding, **saying: The kingdom of this world—** that is **the kingdom** in which the old enemy used to reign — **is become God's and his Christ's, and they shall reign for ever and ever.** In them, that is the Father and the Son, the Trinity is understood.

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VERSES 16, 17, and 18

And the four and twenty ancients, who sit on their seats in the sight of God, fell on their faces. Concerning the **ancients**, it has already been said that they signify the preachers, because a genus should be understood in the species. It is right for them to be **twenty-four** because of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles. By the **seats** and the **ancients** is understood one seat, that of Christ, consisting of superiors and inferiors. It is right to say that the **ancients sit in the sight of God**, because, when they examine the actions of their inferiors, they do not seek thereby human gratitude, but God's glory. They **fall on their faces** because they attribute all good not to themselves, but to **God. And adored God, saying: We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who wast, and who art.** By the fact that they do not say "who art to come," it is made clear that all this will be said or done at the last judgment. As for what follows, **because thou hast received thy great power, and the nations were angry**, it refers to his first coming. He received in his humanity **the great power** he has always had by his divinity. On the other hand, what is said next, **because thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead**, refers to his second coming. Yet since the Lord says, *Love your enemies*, [Matt. 5:44 and Luke 6:27/35] how can it be said that these people are giving **thanks** for the coming of his wrath against the reprobates? Therefore they are not rejoicing at the destruction of the wicked, but at their own resurrection and glorification, which they know cannot possibly be fulfilled unless the damnation of the wicked comes first. It is according to this interpretation that the souls of the slain

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under the altar of God are said to cry, *How long, O Lord*, etc.; [Rev. 6:10] for they are not asking for revenge, but to be themselves rewarded after revenge has been taken on the wicked. Hence the Psalmist: *The just shall rejoice when he shall see the revenge*. [Ps. 57:11] The Judge's wrath does not mean a perturbation of the mind, but its straightness. So one shall see him such as one's own conscience is like. **That thou shouldest judge them, and render reward to thy servants the prophets and the saints, and to them that fear thy name, little and great.** When the apostle says that *we are saved by grace*, [Eph. 2:8] how can the Lord be said here to **render reward**? One should know then that when the Lord **renders reward** to his **servants**, it is his own gifts that he rewards in them, for we could not have any work worthy of reward if we had not received from him the ability to do works. Note also that by the name of **prophets** are represented the apostles. Meanwhile, let no one despair on account of their imperfection, if they nonetheless strive to do perfect things but do not succeed; because even the little ones shall obtain that reward; whence blessed Job: *The small and great are there*. [Job 3:19] **And shouldest banish⁶ them who have corrupted the earth.** They are said to be **banished** rather than killed so as to show the everlasting exile of damnation, their eternal indigence. To **corrupt the earth** is to pervert one's life with wicked works. So it is from this that the third woe of the wicked results, about which it was foretold that it would come quickly with the seventh angel.

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VERSE 19

And the temple was opened in heaven: and the ark of his testament was seen in his temple. This saying goes back to the beginning of faith, and describes the battles of the Church with new symbols. What indeed does God's **temple** signify but Christ, in whom *all the fullness of the Godhead dwells corporeally*? [Col. 2:9] It is said to be **open** because Christ has already been born, suffered, been resurrected, and been elevated, and since it is in the Church that Christ is proclaimed to have done all this, consequently he is said to **open the temple in heaven**. **The ark of the testament**, in which the power of the two Testaments was written by God's finger, means the Church; according to Exodus, this ark has four golden rings with bars through them to be carried on, [Ex. 25:12-14] that is the four Gospels through which the Church is governed by the holy preachers. In it there is a golden pot with manna inside, that is the wisdom of the divine Word with the food of life; and also Aaron's rod, [Heb. 9:4] that is the proof of kingly priesthood. **And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.** **Lightnings** are miraculous signs, by which the minds of the unfaithful were struck so that they submitted to humility; whence the Psalmist: *Thou wilt multiply lightnings, and trouble them.* [Probably a variant of Ps. 143:6, but also reminiscent of Ps. 17:15.] It is appropriate for the **voices**, that is the preachers, to come after the **lightnings**, because, in order to bring the incredulous to faith by speaking, the preachers first displayed new miracles. After words there follow **thunders** in order for those who despise **voices** to be shaken by terror of the judgment. Then **an earthquake**, that is persecution,

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which is also indicated by **hail**; for just as **hail** gets crushed as it crushes the fruits of the earth, and the earth bears fruit again, when the furious multitude of the Gentiles tried to take the name of God away from the earth, it was itself reduced to naught, either by force or by being changed for the better — for quite many of them came to Christ's faith.

NOTES

- (1) The Latin word used in these two places can translate to « Gentiles » as well as « nations ».
- (2) Perhaps it should have been "its *six* ages," or else the number six is here used for a reason left unexplained.
- (3) [Victorinus Petavionensis, Scholia in Apocalypsin Ioannis, PL 5.12.334C]
- (4) The interpretation of the two witnesses being Enoch and Elijah goes at least as far back as St. Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies 5.5.1 (AD 175-185).
- (5) Sic in the text, though it should be sixty.
- (6) The Latin word used here is usually translated here as « destroy », and that is indeed how the Latin translator meant it, because it is what the word in the original Greek means; but the Latin word can also mean « banish », and our commentator interpreted it that way. Cf. note 2 on 9:11; it is the same Latin verb (although the Greek it translates is a different synonym).

COMMENTARY

CHAPTER 12

VERSE 1

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. The **woman clothed with the sun** is blessed Virgin Mary, covered with the power of the Most High. A genus, namely the Church, is also understood in her. The Church is not called a **woman** by reason of weakness, but because it gives birth every day to new people, with whom the general body of Christ is being formed. So the Church is **clothed with the sun** according to this: *As many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.* [Gal. 3:27] Indeed Christ is the *Sun of justice*, [Mal. 4:2] and *the brightness of eternal light*. [Wis. 7:26] **The moon**, which wanes as time passes, represents the mutability of time; and since the Church despises it, it is as if it pressed it down **under** its **feet**. Note also that there are some things in the following that do not correspond to the species, but to the genus. **And on her head a crown of twelve stars.** **The twelve stars** the **crown** is fitted with are the twelve apostles, through whom the Head of the Church, that is Christ, first won victory. They are called **stars** because the reason of truth illuminates the darkness of ignorance.

VERSE 2

And being with child, she cried travailling in birth, and was in pain to be delivered. This cannot refer specifically to blessed Mary, but it refers to the Church, which suffers here a certain difficulty in childbirth when it tries to give

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birth once again to people it had already given **birth** to, *until*, according to the apostle's saying, *we all meet unto a perfect man*. [Eph. 4:13]

VERSE 3

And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns: and on his heads seven diadems. The Devil is called a **dragon** because of his evilness, **great** because of the manifoldness of his snares, and **red** because of his murders. He is seen **in heaven**, that is in the Church, not because he possesses it, but because he opposes it. By his **heads** and **horns** is indicated his entire kingdom, as if **seven heads** were coming against the seven churches, seven wicked spirits against the sevenfold Spirit of God, and **ten horns** against the ten commandments of the law — but we shall speak about all this more at length in the following.

VERSE 4

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. The dragon's **tail** is depraved preachers, according to this: *The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail*. [Is. 9:15] People who from the outside seem to stick to the pursuit of heavenly life are made to fall into the iniquity of overt error by false preachers out of love for **the earth**. About these people Job says, *Let the stars be darkened with the mist thereof*. [Job 3:9] Now since the **tail** is the end of the body, we may understand by it the Antichrist and his preachers, if we take it that the past is here being used for the future — and indeed the casting

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down of these **stars** will be more manifest then. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered; that, when she should be delivered, he might devour her son.** The **dragon** then stood that he might swallow down the Head after it was born, and he is always standing that he may swallow down the limbs of the Head; but, as the following shows, the **woman's son** escaped the **dragon's** bite because he was taken up to the Father's throne. From this there arises a serious question; for neither did Christ physically climb to heaven as soon as he was born and sought by Herod, nor do his limbs avoid the **dragon's** teeth by leaving the body altogether to come to their Head. One should know then that the right faith, which keeps the commandments of life and is revealed by the sacred pages of the Scriptures, is an ascent of the mind towards God, by means of which one avoids the **dragon's** evilness. Therefore he does not mean an ascent in the physical sense. Note also that those whom the **dragon** is not said to stand behind, but before, are those who know his tricks.

VERSE 5

And she brought forth a man son.¹ The one gave birth to the Head, the other gives birth to the limbs of the Head. But why did he add **man**, since he already said **son**? Because it can be said either in a positive sense with regards to someone's excellence in strength, or in a negative sense with regards to the immensity of their wickedness: just as it is here used in a positive sense, so is it used in a negative sense in Jeremiah when he says, *Cursed be the man that brought the tidings to my father, saying: A man child is*

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*born to thee.*² For the rest, the Church does not give birth to any effeminate, any slack child. **Who is to rule all nations with an iron rod.** This refers both to the Head and to the body. By the **rod** is represented the straightness of justice; whence the Psalmist, *The rod of thy kingdom is a straight rod.* [Variant of Ps. 44:7] Now, what is meant by what is said after that, **as the vessel of a potter they shall be broken,** if not that vile works among the inferiors are broken by the severity of justice so that they may be turned from worthless vessels into vessels of honor and sanctification? Though it could also refer to Christ's reprobates. **And her son was taken up to God, and to his throne.** This was explained a little earlier.

VERSE 6

And the woman shall flee into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared by God, that there they should feed her a thousand two hundred sixty days. The **woman's fleeing into the wilderness** means the same as her son's being taken up to God; for the Church flees, not in a physical ascent, but in a spiritual one. **The wilderness** is the secret of the mind; for, in order to escape the serpent's venom, holy men make themselves a desert by contemning all transitory and fleshly desires. Note also that it is the duty of preachers to **feed** this **woman**. As for the place where she is fed, it is he to whom it is said, *Be thou unto me a protective God, and a place of refuge.* [Variant of Ps. 30:3] He is also the food she is fed with, he who says, *I am the living bread.* [John 6:51] The number of days mentioned here signifies the times of the Antichrist, but while still also including the whole time of this life from

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the preaching and Passion of Christ. Indeed evangelical preaching was performed by the Lord during the same number of days as it will be finished in the end by the last preachers.

VERSE 7

And there was a great battle in heaven, Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. Let the faithful's hearts not believe that this **battle** happened when the old enemy fell from **heaven** with his followers because of his pride; but it should be believed without any doubt that it has been on-going since the beginning of the Christian faith and will last until the end of this life, because it is demonstrated that **the dragon**, that is the Devil, has been **fighting** back and offering opposition **in heaven**, that is in the Church (whence it is proclaimed by the apostle's voice, *Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against the spirits of wickedness in the high places*) [Eph. 6:12] ever since the beginning. Now if *we* are fighting, why is it said, contradictorily with this idea, that **Michael** is fighting? With regards to this, one should know that it is shown in numerous other passages too that the struggle against the Devil belongs both to us and to angels; for while Peter said, *Whom resist ye, strong in faith*, [1 Pet. 5:9] and James, *Resist the devil, and he will fly from you*, [James 4:7] yet David declares that this same thing is done by angels, saying, *The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him: and shall deliver them*. [Ps. 33:8] By these examples it is shown that neither do we fight without the angels' fighting, nor do the **angels** without our fighting. Some **angels** are said to be **Michael's** not

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because, as the perfidy of some heretics would have it, he created them, but because he received them from God as a help, or because it is believed that they are soldiers under one king and from one city, in the same way as the **angels** who are demonstrated to belong to **the dragon** and to do his will are called the dragon's angels — and bad men are included in their number, just as we are included in the number of the good **angels**.

VERSE 8

And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. How can it be said that evil spirits **prevail not**, while they deceive many people, and people who used to be the Redeemer's dwelling become the deceiver's place? Therefore by the whole we should understand a part, over which the multitude of evil spirits cannot prevail to cause their eternal death; for one gives a place to the old enemy when one commits a deadly fault. Or if it is not this, then surely this prophecy refers to the time of the Antichrist, when they have been driven away from among the elect and have no time to deceive any more.

VERSE 9

And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world; he was cast unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Our enemy is called a **dragon** because of his evilness, **great** because of the hugeness of his wickedness, a **serpent** because of his

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snare, **old** because of the long duration of his deception, and **devil** because of his fall from heaven and his accusation of the faithful and elect: indeed, **devil** means both “flowing downwards” and “slanderer;”³ as for **Satan**, it means “adversary.” In saying **who seduceth the whole world**, he mentioned the **whole** to mean a part. So, where was **the dragon cast** from, and where to, if not from heaven to **the earth**, that is from the minds of the elect into the hearts of the reprobates? Not that he was not already in them before, but once he has been driven out of the elect, he rules over the reprobates all the more.

VERSE 10

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: Now is there made salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God day and night. Since the dragon falls from heaven to the earth every day, it is certain that this **voice**, which is a desire of the mind for praising, starts from the Lord's coming, and does not stop clamoring in heaven, that is in the Church, until the end of the world. Therefore it is all time that is included in the adverb **now**. They say that **salvation is made** because we have been saved by the free goodness of **God**; **strength** because we have been strengthened by it; and **power** because we have been raised to a high glory. Indeed all these things have been made among men, although not by man, but by Jesus **Christ**. The Devil **accuses** people **day and night** when he takes care that some be lifted up in success, and others broken in adversity. The Devil accuses the saints not by speaking on

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the outside, but by listening on the inside; for his evilness is his accusation of the saints.

VERSE 11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. They overcome him by the blood of the Lamb because they follow the example of the sufferings of Christ, **and by the word of their testimony** because they keep the rightness of faith. It is then added concerning them, **and they loved not their lives unto death**, which means that they put themselves to **death** so as **not to love their lives** wickedly.

VERSE 12

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you that dwell therein. He invites the **heavens** in the plural to **rejoice**, because he is here indicating the numerousness of the churches, which all make up one. By those who **dwell** in heaven he means angels or holy men, for whom it is right to rejoice together in harmony in the Lord when, the enemy vanquished, men come back to the fellowship of angels. There is nothing more here that needs explaining, except that, with this joy remaining, this book should come to its due end.

HERE ENDS THE FIFTH BOOK

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The exposition of the remaining chapters is missing from the manuscript, whether Alcuin wrote it or not — though in verse 3 of this last chapter he does promise that he will write more.⁴

NOTES

(1) The Latin word is usually translated here as « child », but « son » better conveys the masculine character of the Latin word, which is what is under discussion here. « Son » is the most literal and classical translation of the word, but at a certain point Latin came to use it sometimes as « child ».

(2) Jer. 20:15. The Latin word used here can translate to either « child » or « boy ». So it is also masculine; it means a male child, albeit it can also be used for any child in a « gender-unmarked », generalized manner, the masculine being Latin's default gender for human beings — e.g. if you wanted to say in Latin that someone had adopted a child, without yourself knowing the child's gender or without wishing to specify it, you would use the masculine word for « child », by default. All in all, the two expressions used in Rev. and Jer. for « man child » do not sound quite as pleonastic in Latin as « man/male son » or « man/male boy » do in English, but still enough for commentators to see something in it.

(3) English « devil » < Latin *diabolus* < Greek διάβολος (*diabolos*), meaning « slandering » or « slanderer », derived from the verb διαβάλλειν (*diaballein*), which means 1. to throw over or across, 2. to set at variance, 3. to slander. The verb διαβάλλειν is itself composed of δια—, meaning « through » or « asunder », and βάλλειν, the basic meaning of which is « to throw », but which can also mean « to throw oneself », « to fall », notably with reference to a river; this is where the « flowing » interpretation must come from.

(4) This is a note by the editor of the Latin text.

ALCUIN OF YORK

THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL
ON REVELATION

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL

PREFACE TO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Your most pious, inextricable, and, so to speak, obstinate request keeps annoyingly assailing the ears of my smallness so that, moved by a feeling of compassion, since putting oneself in a suffering person's place enables one to well understand their state of mind, I should endeavor to write for your suffering heart something such that your afflicted mind could be comforted by. When I was finally overcome by your prayers, I was suddenly caught between fear and the desire to comply with your wish; but as I lifted up my mind's eyes towards the Bestower of gifts, I forgot my hesitation, and immediately felt certain that what the love of a son¹ from a fraternal heart commanded me to do could not be impossible. I indeed despaired of being fit for this task, but, made stronger by this very despair concerning myself, I immediately raised my hope up to him by whom *the tongues of the dumb are made free*, [Is. 35:6] who *makes the tongues of infants eloquent*, [Wis. 10:21] and arranged the big stupid brays of a donkey into the meaningful notes of human speech. [Num. 22:28] How would it be surprising, then, if he who tells his truth even through the mouths of beasts of burden when he so wishes, provided a foolish man with understanding? Therefore, girt with the strength that this consideration gave me, I roused my barren and sluggish mind to at least fulfill the wish expressed in your order, and I applied myself to the work, nonetheless considering that a fraternal work concedes to love, and does it for nothing in exchange; and although the life of the one by whom I am compelled to do this surpasses me by far, I did not think it was injurious if a

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leaden pipe supplied running water for the use of men. As Pope Gregory says, whoever speaks about God must take care to search carefully for all that instructs the manners of their listeners, and consider it the right method of speaking if they usefully turn away from what they had started talking about when an opportunity for edification requires them to. In fact, a commentator of the sacred Scripture should imitate the behavior of a river: while a river flows down its bed, if it touches hollow valleys on its side, it directly turns its current away into them, and when it has filled them sufficiently, it suddenly flows back into its bed: this is how a commentator of the divine Scripture should be: when he is discussing any matter, if he happens to find on its side an occasion for fit edification, he should turn the flow of his tongue to it as though to a nearby valley, and come back to the bed of the speech he had initially intended when he has sufficiently filled the plain of this extra instruction. The fact is that, just as the divine Word trains the clever in its mysteries, so does it generally reinvigorate the simple on its surface; it has in the open what it needs to feed little children, and keeps in a secret place what it needs to suspend in admiration the minds of elevated people. It is indeed like a river, so to speak, shallow and deep, in which a lamb may walk and an elephant may swim. As for this river of my smallness, which was not drawn from myself, but from the source of expert fathers (that is to say, my nightly work), I have sent it for your clemency to review, not because it was so worthy that I had to, but because I remembered I had promised it on your request. It consists of little symbolical and obscure questions on the Apocalypse. Whatever your alertness may find lukewarm and unpolished in them, let it be the quicker to forgive me

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that it is not ignorant of the fact that I am saying this while being sick. For when the body is exhausted by illness, the mind is also affected, and one's application to writing grows weaker as well. At every hour and every moment, I am wearied by my stomach's weakness; slow but continuous pains keep me panting. Because of that, whatever I start out of inclination for writing and reading, I long for its end. As someone said, a reader is refreshed from his concentration in the end of a book as a traveler is refreshed from his effort in an inn. It is indeed also clear that something brief usually gets better impressed in memory than a long discussion. You want me, my only son,² since I certainly could not easily explain these things with new words, to draw a bowl of water from the source of the teachers to satisfy your thirst; that is, you want me to search their sayings so as to give clearer answers, in a simple language, to the questions that may trouble your mind. The words of the Apocalypse indeed, like the rest of the sacred Scriptures, are open in some places and shut in others; in some places they are mystical and figurative, whereas in others they are to be understood in their simpler, literal meaning. This is in order that intellectually gifted people may get some training in the more obscure passages, and that simple people may find refreshment in the more obvious ones; that in its mystical passages the Word of God may be our food, sent to the internal organs of understanding after being chewed by our spiritual teeth; and that in its obvious passages it may be a drink, sent to refresh the internal organs of the mind upon a simple reading, without any chewing effort, as though by means of a cup. The sacred Scripture is put before our mind's eyes like a mirror so that we may see our inner face in it; for that

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is where we find out what is ugly or beautiful in us; that is where we feel how successful or how far from success we are. *His sons*, the story says, *went, and made a feast by houses every one in his day*. [Job 1:4] The sons make a feast by houses when every virtue feeds the mind in its own way. The day of every one of the sons is the illumination of every one of the virtues. To enumerate briefly these gifts of the sevenfold grace: wisdom has a day, understanding has a day, reflection has a day, courage has a day, knowledge has a day, kindness has a day, and fear has a day. To be wise is not the same as to understand, because many people have knowledge of eternal things but are utterly unable to understand them. So, wisdom makes a feast in its day because it refreshes the mind with the hope and certitude of eternal things; understanding prepares a feast in its day because, by the fact that it penetrates the things one has heard, it refreshes the heart and thus illuminates its darkness; reflection provides a feast in its day because, as it prevents you from being rash, it fills your mind with reason; courage makes a feast in its day because, as it does not fear adversity, it serves the panicking mind the food of confidence; knowledge prepares a feast in its day because it overcomes the starvation of ignorance in the mind's belly; kindness provides a feast in its day because it fills the inside of the heart with works of mercy; fear makes a feast in its day because, as it oppresses the mind to prevent it from becoming too proud about the present, it strengthens it for the future with the food of hope. Now, what I see in this feast of the sons that requires careful examination is that they feed one another. Indeed any virtue on its own is left quite resourceless if one virtue is not sustained by another. Wisdom is lesser if it lacks understanding, and

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understanding is quite useless if it is not sustained by wisdom, because when understanding penetrates too elevated things without the weight of wisdom, its lightness lifts it up only for it to fall down the more heavily. Reflection is worthless if it lacks the strength of courage, because without strength it cannot bring to completion any plan it has formed by analyzing things; and courage is left quite resourceless if it is not sustained by reflection, because, without the control of reason, the more strength sees it is capable of, the worse its headlong fall is. Knowledge is nothing if it does not have the utility of kindness, because when it fails to put the good things it knows into practice, it binds itself too tightly to judgment; and kindness is quite useless if it lacks the discernment of knowledge, because when no knowledge enlightens it, it does not know how to be compassionate in the right way. Fear too, without a shadow of a doubt, does not rise to any good action if it does not also have these virtues, because then, as it panics at everything, it remains inactive and does no good. I need to quote the prophet advising, *Enter into thy chambers, shut thy doors*. [Is. 26:20] In fact, we walk into our chambers when we enter the recesses of our minds, and we shut the doors when we repress forbidden desires. The difficulty of the aforementioned questions is truly obvious when, right in the beginning of the chapter, the title is given, not in Latin, but in Greek.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL

CHAPTER 1

(1:1) QUESTION: What does it mean that he says, **The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him**, since the Son is equal to the Father? ANSWER: It needed to be revealed by what development the Church founded by the apostles would be enlarged and how it would be made perfect in the end, so as to strengthen the preachers of the faith against the adversity of the world. John attributes the glory of the Son to the Father in the manner usual to him, and thus declares that Jesus Christ received the revelation of this mystery from God.

QUESTION: What is meant by **the things which must shortly come to pass**? ANSWER: It means the things that will happen to the Church in the present time.

QUESTION: What is meant by **and signified** or, as some books have it, “sealed?”³ ANSWER: He interwove this same Apocalypse with mystical words so that it should not lose its worth if it was obvious to everyone.

(1:3) QUESTION: What is meant by **Blessed is he that reads and they that hear the words of this prophecy**, etc.? ANSWER: The teacher and his listeners are blessed because, for those who keep the words of God, the short time of hardship is followed by eternal joys. As the Truth replied to the woman who said to him that the womb of the mother of such great son was blessed as well as her paps, *even more blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it*. [Luke 11:27-28] For he may doubtless call singularly blessed whoever is quick to understand it correctly and to put it into practice once they understand it,

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and, finally, as he stipulates in this same book: *And he that heareth, let him say: Come*, [Rev. 22:17] that is, let whoever perceives the inner light of faith and glory⁴ in their mind, also call others to it; or, as it is said concerning the same Truth, *the things which Jesus began to do and to teach*. [Acts 1:1]

(1:4-5) QUESTION: What does it mean that John salutes only **seven churches** whereas the Master of truth says, *Go ye into the whole world, and preach to every creature?* [Mark 16:15]

ANSWER: Through these seven churches, he writes to the whole Church. Indeed totality is often represented by the number seven, because all this worldly time flies by in cycles of seven days. THERE FOLLOWS:

Grace be unto you and peace from him that is, and that was, and that is to come, and from the seven spirits.

ANSWER: He wishes the pious people grace and peace from God the eternal Father, the sevenfold Spirit, and Jesus Christ, who gave testimony to the Father in the human form he assumed. He names the Son in the third place as he is going to say more about him. He also names him last because he is the first and the last, and he has already named him together with the Father when he said **that is to come. The first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.**

(1:6) QUESTION: What is meant by **And hath made us a kingdom, and priests to God and his Father?** ANSWER:

Seeing that the King of kings and heavenly Priest united us to his body by sacrificing himself for us, there is no one among the saints who does not spiritually have the office of a priest, since each of them is a member of the highest and eternal Priest. (1:8) THERE FOLLOWS: **I am Alpha and**

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Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God.

ANSWER: **The beginning** means the one whom no one precedes; **the end**, the one whom no one succeeds. — He also repeats the same words again: **who is, and who was, and who is to come**. ANSWER: He had said the same about the Father, for God the Father both came and **is to come** in the Son.

(1:13) QUESTION: He affirms that he saw **one like to the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet**.

ANSWER: The **garment down to the feet**, which is a priestly garment, represents Christ's priesthood, in which he offered himself for us on the altar of the cross as a sacrifice to the Father.

CHAPTER 2

(2:10) QUESTION: What is meant by **and you shall have tribulation ten days**? ANSWER: It means the whole time during which the commandments of the Decalogue are necessary; for, as long as you follow the light of the divine Word, you are bound to suffer the prison of the opposing enemy.

CHAPTER 3

(3:1) QUESTION: What is meant by what he says **to the angel of the church of Sardis, I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive: and thou art dead**? ANSWER: To yourself you do look alive, but if you are not

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watchful in the correction of the wicked, you shall soon be counted among the dead, because it is no use for leaders to live a good life themselves if they fail to correct others; which is also why Solomon says, *Thou shalt not give sleep to thy eyes, neither slumber to thy eyelids*. [Variant of Prov. 6:4]

(3:2) QUESTION: What is meant by **for I find not thy works full before my God**? ANSWER: A leader's works are not **full before God** if he does not strive to rouse others as well, however innocent he may seem to people.

(3:15) QUESTION: What is meant by what he says to the angel of Laodicea, **I know thy works, that thou art neither cold, nor hot**? ANSWER: You are neither ardent in faith nor completely unfaithful. If you were still unfaithful, there would be some hope left for you to convert; but now, since you know the Lord's will and do not do it, you are thrown out of the inside of my Church.

(3:19) THERE FOLLOWS: **Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise**. ANSWER: Do not shrink from suffering adversity, since it is a specific sign of being loved by the Lord.

(3:20) QUESTION: What is meant by **Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock**? ANSWER: I am in any case knocking at your heart's door with the hand of exhortation, and if you receive it willingly, you shall be considered worthy to have me as an inhabitant and coheir.

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CHAPTER 5

(5:1) QUESTION: What is meant by **And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and without?** ANSWER: This vision represents the mysteries of the holy Scripture disclosed to us by the incarnation of the Lord. It is as if the Scripture's concordant unity contained the Old Testament outside and the New inside. THERE FOLLOWS: **Sealed with seven seals.** ANSWER: It means either covered with all the fullness of its hidden mysteries or written by the disposition of the sevenfold Spirit. Indeed the entire series of the Old and of the New Testament warns us that we should do penance for our sins, seek the kingdom of heaven, and flee the tears of hell.

(5:3) QUESTION: **And no man was able, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, to open the book.** ANSWER: No angel nor any of the just, even freed from the bond of the flesh, was able to reveal or discover the mysteries of the divine law. — **Nor to look on it.** — That is, to contemplate the splendor of the grace of the New Testament, just like the children of Israel were unable to look at the face of the one who brought the Old Testament which contained the New. (5:4) THERE FOLLOWS: **And I wept much.** ANSWER: It means that he realized the common misery of mankind and felt sad. (5:5) THERE FOLLOWS: **And one of the ancients said to me: Weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed.** ANSWER: He is forbidden to **weep** because the mystery that had long lain hidden had then already been fulfilled in Christ's Passion.

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CHAPTER 6

(6:1) QUESTION: **And I saw that the Lamb had opened one of the seals.** ANSWER: Since you first loose the seals before opening a book, he has reversed the normal order for a certain reason. When the Lord suffered and was resurrected, he informed us that he was the end of the law, and when he went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, he strengthened the Church with the gift of a more secret mystery. Therefore he opened the book then, and now he is loosing its seals. So, in the first seal, John sees the honor of the primitive Church; in the following three, the threefold war against the Church; in the fifth, the glory of the winners in this war; in the sixth, the things that are to come in the time of the Antichrist; and, after recapitulating previous events a bit, in the seventh, he sees the beginning of eternal rest.

(6:6) QUESTION: What is meant by **Two pounds of wheat for a penny, and thrice two pounds of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the wine and the oil?** ANSWER: He is saying: Be careful not to entice your brother into sin through bad example, your brother for whom Christ died, and who wears the signs of the sacred blood and unction; because Church members, from those who are perfect in merits to those who are the least ones in the Church but are nonetheless imbued with faith in the holy Trinity, have all been redeemed for the perfect price of the Lord's blood. It is also not without reason that perfection in faith or work is represented by **two pounds** rather than a single one, because both are based on the root of the double love.

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(6:9) QUESTION: What is meant by **I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God?**

ANSWER: He who had said that the Church was manifoldly afflicted in the present, also mentions the glory of souls after the suffering of bodies. He says, **I saw them under the altar**, that is, in the secret place of eternal praise; for the golden altar that is inside and near the coffer of the Lord's body, does not offer the Lord flesh and blood like an exterior altar, but only the incense of praise; and those who now *present their bodies as a living sacrifice*, [Rom. 12:1] will then, when the bonds of their flesh are broken, *sacrifice to him the sacrifice of praise*. [Cf. Ps. 115:16-17] However, there could also be a hyperbaton, so that he would not have seen them **under the altar**, but **slain** under the altar, that is, under the testification of the name of Christ, in the same way as it is said about the Maccabees, They fell under the covenant of God. [2 Macc. 7:36 acc. to LXX] Now, my dearest son,⁵ [...] ⁶

CHAPTER 7

(7:4) QUESTION: What is meant by **And I heard the number of them that were signed, an hundred forty-four thousand were signed, of every tribe of the children of Israel?**

ANSWER: By this finite number is signified the innumerable multitude of the whole Church, which was born of the patriarchs through imitation, whether by lineage of the flesh or by lineage of faith — for, he says, *If you be Christ's, then are you the seed of Abraham*. [Gal. 3:29] An increase in perfection is referred to by the fact that the number twelve itself is multiplied by twelve, and

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completed, to form the entire sum, by the number thousand, which is the cube number of ten,⁷ signifying the stable life of the Church. The reason why the Church is often symbolized by the number twelve is that it is present throughout the world, which is divided into four parts, and it is based on faith in the holy Trinity; for three times four make twelve. Finally, the apostles chosen to preach the same faith to the world were also twelve in number, symbolizing by their number the mystery of their work. So, of the tribe of **Juda** were twelve thousand signed. It is fitting for him to start with **Juda**, which is the tribe that our Lord was born of, and to omit Dan, which it is said that the Antichrist will be born of (as it is written: *Let Dan be a snake in the way, a serpent in the path, that biteth the horse's heels that his rider may fall*); [Gen. 49:17] for it is not the order of earthly generation that he decided to present here, but the virtues of the Church, according to the interpretations of the names — the Church, which, with its present confession and praise, hastens to the right hand which is eternal life: this is indeed what the names **Juda**, who is put first, and **Benjamin**, who is put last, mean. So **Juda**, which translates to “confession” or “laudation,” is put first because no one lays hold of the summit of goods before the beginning of confession, and if we do not renounce bad actions through confession, we cannot be instructed for right actions. Second comes **Ruben**, which translates to “he who sees the child.” The Psalmist testifies that what is indicated by children is works, as he says in the blessings of the blessed man, *Thy children as young plants of olive-trees*, [Ps. 127:3] and also, *And mayest thou see thy children's children*; [Ibid. 6] for it is not because someone who fears the Lord has not begotten children and had

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grandchildren that he cannot be blessed, since a greater reward awaits the virgin faithful; but by children, the Psalmist means works, and by one's children's children, the fruits of one's works, that is the eternal reward. Therefore after **Juda** comes **Ruben**, that is, after the beginnings of divine confession and praise comes perfection of action. Yet, since *through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*, [Acts 14:21] after **Ruben** follows **Gad**, which translates to “temptation” or “girded.” After the beginning of good work, a person must be tested with greater temptations and gird themselves for harder battles, so that the strength of their faith may be tested. As Solomon says, *Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear; prepare thy soul for temptation*. [Sir. 2:1] Then, since we consider blessed those who have endured suffering, after **Gad** comes **Aser**, which means “blessed.” This order is fitting enough, for *blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive a crown of life*. [James 1:12] Now, since, feeling secure because of the faithful promise of this blessedness, they do not feel afflicted, but, rejoicing in hope and patient in tribulation, they sing together with the Psalmist, *I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart*, [Ps. 118:32] and say, rejoicing with the mother of blessed Samuel, *My mouth is enlarged over my enemies: because I have joyed in thy salvation*, [1 Sam. 2:1] for this reason, next comes **Nephthali**, which means “wideness.” **Nephthali** himself is followed by **Manasses**, which translates to “having forgotten” or “necessity.” By the mystery of this name, we are told, taught by the torments of present temptations, to forget the things that are behind and to stretch forth, like the Apostle,

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to those that are before, [Phil. 3:13] without making *provision for the flesh in its concupiscences*, [Rom. 13:14] but only when we are forced to by the necessity of human condition, which the Psalmist was talking about when he prayed, sighing for better things, *Deliver me from my necessities*. [Ps. 24:17] After this one comes **Simeon**, which means “He has heard sorrow” or “the name of the dwelling,” so that by the nature of this word too he may inculcate in us the more evidently both what we must get here and what we must expect to good effect; for the joy of the heavenly dwelling will be given to those whose minds are here saddened with a fruitful penitence. It is also said to these people, *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. [John 16:20] Then follows **Levi**, which means “added,” in whom we understand either those who buy eternal things at the cost of temporal ones (as Solomon says, *The ransom of a man's life are his riches*) [Prov. 13:8]⁸ or those who, because they follow God's counsel, receive a hundredfold in this world with tribulations, and in the world to come life everlasting. [Mark 10:30] These people are also being referred to in what is written: *He that addeth knowledge, addeth labour*. [Eccles. 1:18] Indeed the reason why tribulations were heaped on saint Job was in order for a bigger reward to be rendered to him once he had been successfully tested. Whence it is not without reason that **Issachar**, which translates to “reward,” comes directly after this one; because, as the apostle teaches us, *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us*. [Rom. 8:18] Indeed battle is fought more effectively when a sure reward is expected. God works and completes all this in the dwelling of strength, which is what **Zabulon** means, when *power is*

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made perfect in infirmity [2 Cor. 12:9] so that a body that is thought weak by one's enemies, and through whose matter they try to inflict death on the soul as well, turns out to be invincible when God strengthens it. There follows a happy increase, which is what the name **Joseph** means, denoting more gifts of graces to be given, whether you understand by this the spiritual interests gained from the twofold return of the talents, [Ref. to Matt. 25:14-30] or whether you take it to mean those rendered to God the Redeemer by the faithful's votive piety. Then, so that you may understand that all these people, whose order and names' interpretations both show that they have been placed here in a way that signifies something, will be on the right hand of Christ the eternal King in the future judgment, in last position, as we said earlier, comes **Benjamin**, which means "son of the right hand," as if he were the end of the sequence, when the last enemy, death, has been destroyed, [Cf. 1 Cor. 15:26] and the elect are given the eternal happiness of their inheritance — whether it is every one of the faithful that is entitled to be called "son of the right hand," or the whole assembly of the Church, about which we sing, *The queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety.* [Ps. 44:10] So, there are twelve thousand signed out of each tribe because whatever virtues every one of the faithful has succeeded in, they must necessarily always be strengthened by the faith of the ancient fathers and instructed by their examples. It is indeed absolutely certain that the number twelve often represents either the teachers or the whole Church, because of the total number of the apostles or of the patriarchs; for whether the individual faithful are praiseworthy in confession, like in **Juda**; outstanding in offspring of works

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in **Ruben**; strong in the trial of temptations in **Gad**; successful by their victory in battles in **Aser**; enlarged by bountiful works of compassion in **Nephthali**; forgetting the things that are behind in **Manasses**; or as though sad thus far in the valley of tears, but always rejoicing in the name of the dwelling, and sighing for the heavenly Jerusalem in **Simeon**; whether those in **Levi**, who rejoice in the promises both of the present life and of the future one, as they receive temporal goods in addition, while having the eternal good as their foundation; those in **Issachar**, who are strengthened by the contemplation of the future reward; those in **Zabulon**, who lay down their lives for Christ; those in **Joseph**, who also strive after an increase in spiritual substance, and offer something more in addition to God's commandments, whether in virginity or from their resources; or those in **Benjamin**, who seek with tireless wishes after the right hand which is eternal happiness, it is fitting that each of these, in their own calling, be marked by the rule of the preceding fathers as though by the number twelve, and that from the merits of all individuals there be reckoned the most perfect beauty of the Church, as the sum of a **hundred forty-four thousand**.

CHAPTER 8

(8:5) QUESTION: What is meant by what is said in the second book after a few words, **and there were thunders and voices and lightnings, and a great earthquake?**

ANSWER: He moved⁹ the earth with the thunder of heavenly threats, the voice of exhortation, the lightning of miracles, and the examples of the saints.

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CHAPTER 10

(10:8) QUESTION: What is meant by what he says in the second book, **And the voice which I heard from heaven speaking to me: Go, and take the book that is open, from the hand of the angel?** ANSWER: It is when the Lord reveals the mysteries of the future and says, *The kingdom of heaven will be at hand.*[Cf. Matt. 3:2, 4:17, 10:7]¹⁰ (10:9) — **And I went to the angel, saying unto him, that he should give me the book.**— Let whoever would like to receive the mysteries of teaching come to the Lord. — **And he said to me: Take the book, and eat it up.** — That is, put it inside of yourself and transcribe it in the whole breadth of your heart. QUESTION: **And**, says he, **it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey.** ANSWER: When you have received it, you shall be delighted by the sweetness of the divine Word, but you shall feel the bitterness when you start preaching and doing what you have understood. Indeed he indicates what the book eaten up and the sweetness mixed with bitterness means, when he says, *Thou must preach again to many nations and peoples*, [Rev. 10:11] referring to the fact that he would be freed from his exile and would preach the Gospel to the nations — the Gospel is of course sweet with regards to its love, but bitter with regards to the persecutions one has to endure for it.

CHAPTER 14

(14:1) QUESTION: **And I beheld, and lo a lamb stood upon mount Sion.** ANSWER: It means that, when his

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Church is sweating under the burden of struggles, the Lord Christ will be there for it with his example of courage and his protection. **THERE FOLLOWS: And with him an hundred forty-four thousand.** **ANSWER:** This finite number should be taken as being used for an indefinite one, and, in the meaning of its secret mystery, it is fit for a multitude of virgins which, loving God with all heart, all soul, and all mind, [Cf. Matt. 22:37] is also consecrated to him through integrity of the body, which consists of four qualities; for three times three are nine and four times four are sixteen, and sixteen times nine make a hundred forty-four, so that, when we see such a perfect multitude made up of those who deserve to be seen on **Mount Sion** with the **Lamb** because they have led a stricter life, there may be no doubt concerning the rest of the members of the Church. **THERE FOLLOWS: Having his name, and the name of the Father, written on their foreheads.** **ANSWER:** He shows what the mark on the forehead of the beast's body is imitating, when he says that "God" and "Christ" are written on the foreheads of the Church. As for what he calls **Sion**, he shows that it is nothing else but the Church, which, in order to overcome the pains of afflictions, raised up by the high joy of contemplation, celebrates the battles of its King both by praise and by imitation; for this is truly to sing hymns for the standing Lamb.

(14:2) **QUESTION: And the voice which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps.** **ANSWER:** While God's harpers are all the saints, who crucify *their flesh with the vices and concupiscences* [Gal. 5:24] and *praise him with psaltery and harp*, [Ps. 150:3] how much more those who by the privilege of evangelical chastity

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make all of themselves a holocaust to the Lord, deny themselves singularly, and, taking up their cross, will follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth! [Matt. 16:24, Luke 9:23, Rev. 14:4] (14:3) **THERE FOLLOWS: And they sang as it were a new canticle before the throne.**

ANSWER: The old canticle was, *Blessed is he that hath seed in Sion and household in Jerusalem*, [Is. 31:9 acc. to LXX] but the new one is, *Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not*, [Gal. 4:27, Is. 54:1 (the latter acc. to LXX)] and also, *I will give to the eunuchs in my house, says the Lord, and within my walls, a place, and a name better than sons and daughters*. [Is. 56:4-5] **QUESTION: And no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth.**

ANSWER: To have the singular privilege to sing **the canticle** with the Lamb means to rejoice with him forever more than all the other faithful because even one's flesh is uncorrupted. The rest of the elect can nonetheless hear this canticle, although they cannot say it; out of love, they are naturally happy to see them in that high status, even though they themselves cannot rise to the level of their rewards. (14:4) **THERE FOLLOWS: These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb.** ANSWER: Out of the holy and immaculate flock of the Church, they are chosen by the Holy Spirit, for the merits of their will, as yet holier and purer sacrifices. The apostle, having *no commandment of the Lord* concerning them, [1 Cor. 7:25] beseeches them to *present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God*. [Rom. 12:1]

(14:5) **QUESTION: And in their mouth there was found no lie.** ANSWER: The merit of chastity alone does not

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suffice for virgins to be joined to the divine escort, if they have not also led a life clean of all contamination of sin. We should ask the question of how he can say that there **was found no lie in their mouths**, while the Holy Spirit affirms elsewhere, *Every man is a liar*, [Ps. 115 :11] and the Apostle says the same in Romans, to refute the arrogance of the Jews: *Every man is a liar, but God is true; That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayest overcome when thou art judged*. [Rom. 3:4] Augustine¹¹ affirms that not even the life of others should be protected by means of our lie. The same, however, most subtly described in a splendid language seven kinds of lie. Here it is as when the Lord says, *If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin*, [John 15:22] and we do not understand this to mean every sin, but a specific one. If we sometimes something that is not the case, and yet we believe that same thing firmly in our minds, it should not be ascribed to lie, but rather to error. In their mouths, that is, in the mouths of those who preach and give testimony to Christ, there was found no lie. There is a sin of lie that begets death, as in *Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie*, [Ps. 5:7] and there is a lie that does not lack defect, but lacks the death caused by a serious fault, as the reader's attention may find out on a great many pages of the Scriptures of the New and of the Old Testament.¹² Tychonius does not interpret this vision as being about virgins specifically, but about the whole Church in general, which the apostle espoused to one husband that he might present it *as a chaste virgin to Christ*, [2 Cor. 11:2] and he concludes thus: He did not say, "In their mouths there hath been no lie" but **there was found no lie**, just as the apostle says, *And such some of you were; but you are washed*, [1

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Cor. 6:11] and as in *The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him, in what day soever he shall turn from his wickedness* [Ezek. 33:12] — and he shall be able to be a virgin, and to have *no guile found in his mouth*. [1 Pet. 2:22] By **virgins** indeed he means chaste and virtuous people.

CHAPTER 19

(19:10) THERE FOLLOWS: **And I fell down at his feet. And he said to me: See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren.** ANSWER: He had said earlier, *I am the first and the last*. [Rev. 1:17] Therefore it shows that the angel was sent in the appearance of the Lord of the Church; for in the end he says, “I am Jesus; I have sent my angel to testify these things in the churches.” [Rev. 22:16] — **Who have the testimony of Jesus.** — After the Lord assumed the role of a man, and thus elevated a man above the skies, the angel was afraid to be adored by a man, since he adored a man God above him. Before the Lord's incarnation, we read that angels were adored by men and that it was absolutely not forbidden by angels. **The testimony of Jesus** is the spirit of prophecy, for all that the spirit of prophecy has said is **the testimony of Jesus**, who has got his testimony from the law and the prophets. “Therefore,” says the angel, “do not adore me as God, as I have come to give testimony to his virtues.” Finally, the angel that is described as having appeared to Moses is called now “angel,” now “Lord:” he is called an angel because he was acting as a servant on the outside as he spoke, and Lord because the Lord was controlling him on

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the inside and providing him with speaking efficiency; therefore, as he is controlled from inside as he speaks, he is called both an angel for his obedience, and Lord for the inspiration he receives. This is how David says, *Attend, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth*.¹ for it was not David's law or David's people, but, assuming the role of the one who made him speak, he spoke in the words of the one whose inspiration he was filled with. We can see this happening every day in the Church, if we look carefully: a church officer reading a passage aloud can shout as he stands in the middle of the people, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob*, [Ex. 3:6] and it is of course not true when says he is God; yet he does not depart from the rule of the truth with what he says, because he is displaying in his voice the lordship of the one for whom he is performing ministry with his reading. That is why, since the writers of the sacred Scripture, filled with the Holy Spirit, are carried above themselves, it is as if they got out of themselves, and they make statements about themselves as if it were about others.

CHAPTER 20

(20:1) **QUESTION: And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand.** **ANSWER:** So, the Lord, equipped with the Father's power, came down in the flesh to wage war against the prince of the world, bind him, and take the latter's containers back. (20:2) **THERE FOLLOWS: And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan.** **ANSWER:** **Devil** translates to “flowing

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downwards,” and in Greek it means “slanderer;”¹³ **Satan** means “adversary” or “prevaricator.” So, he is called a **dragon** because of his evilness in doing harm, a **serpent** because of his craft in deceiving, **devil** because of his fall from his status, and **Satan** because of his obstinacy in opposing the Lord. (20:4) **THERE FOLLOWS: And the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God.** ANSWER: Here is implied what he was going to say afterwards: **reigned with Christ a thousand years.** So, the Church reigns with **Christ** over the living and the dead, for, as the apostle says, *to this end Christ died, that he might be Lord of the living and of the dead.* [Rom. 14:9] Now, he mentioned only **the souls** of the martyrs because those who reign more than others after death are those who have fought unto death for the truth; because it is not those who merely start, but those who persevere who are promised eternal blessedness.

(20:2/3) **QUESTION: After having been bound for a thousand years, he must be loosed a little time.** ANSWER: He will be loosed, as Saint Augustine says,¹⁴ when there is only a short time left. We read indeed that it is during three years and a half that he will rage with all his and his people's might, and those against whom he will have to wage war will be such that they cannot be overcome by his force and snares, great though they be. On the other hand, if he were never loosed, his evil power would be less apparent, the most faithful patience of the holy city would be less well proven, and, finally, it would be less well perceived how great the Devil's evil was that God Almighty had made so good use of; because the more

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powerful the Devil's evilness is, the better and more pleasant will God's power appear.

(20:6) **QUESTION: Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.** **ANSWER:** That is, he who keeps what he has gained in his second birth.¹⁵ **THERE FOLLOWS: But they shall be saints of God and of Christ.** **ANSWER:** Another edition has “priests of God and of Christ.” This does not refer only to bishops and church ministers, who are the ones properly called priests in the Church, but, just as we are all called “christs” because of the mystical unction,¹⁶ so are we all called priests because we are the limbs of one priest; whence Peter says, *a holy nation, a kingly priesthood*. [1 Pet. 2:9] **QUESTION: And shall reign with Christ a thousand years.** **ANSWER:** When John was writing this, the Spirit announced that the Church would reign for **a thousand years**, that is until the end of the world. (20:7) **THERE FOLLOWS: And when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.** **ANSWER:** Saying **finished**, he meant a part by the whole, for **Satan shall be loosed** when there are still left the three years and six months of the last battle; but apart from this trope, it is right to say that the time will **be finished**. (What he earlier defined as three years and a half, he here called three years and six months.)

(20:11/12) **QUESTION: And I saw a great throne, and one sitting upon it, and before him the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life.** **ANSWER:** Another edition has “which is the book of the life of each person.” So, by **the books opened** he means the Testaments, for the world shall be judged according to both Testaments. By **the book of the life of**

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each person he means the memory of our actions, not that the Knower of secrets has a book to remind him of things. **THERE FOLLOWS: And the dead were judged by those things which are written in the books, according to their works.** **ANSWER:** That is, they were judged by the Testaments, according to what they had done or not done of what is in them. **The books** may also be understood to mean the acts of the just, by comparison with which the reprobates are damned, and, when this happens, it is as if they read in books exposed the good they themselves had refused to do.

(20:14/15) **QUESTION: And death and hell were cast into the pool of fire, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life.** **ANSWER:** That is, whosoever was not judged by God as being alive. Whence it seems to me that the right interpretation for the books opened above is rather that of those who interpret them as being every single person's conscience and works being disclosed, and interpret **the book of life** as being God's foreknowledge, which cannot be mistaken concerning those who will be given eternal life, since they are written in that book, that is, foreknown.

CHAPTER 21

(21:1) **QUESTION: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth was gone.** **ANSWER:** That is, when the wicked have been judged, then the shape of this world will pass due to the burning of heavenly fires, so that, heaven and earth being changed for

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the better, the quality of the change of both will harmoniously match the incorruptibility and immortality of the bodies of the saints.

(21:6) **QUESTION: To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely.** **ANSWER:** He now bedews believers on the road with drops of this same fountain which he will let those who overcome drink plentifully from when they have reached their fatherland. He does both freely, and *the grace¹⁷ of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.* [Rom. 6:23]

(21:8) **THERE FOLLOWS: But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable,** etc. **ANSWER:** He always mixes pleasant words with severe ones to instill carefulness into us. As the Psalmist says, *The Lord keepeth all them that love him; but all the wicked he will destroy.* [Ps. 144:20] He puts the fearful together with the unbelieving because you are afraid to venture into the battle when you doubt the reward of the winner. **THERE FOLLOWS: And all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning.** **ANSWER:** He shows that there are many kinds of lies; but the most dangerous and most detestable one is the one with which you sin against religion, this being the kind of lie about which he said earlier, *“They say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, for they are the synagogue of Satan.”* [Rev. 2:9 and 3:9]

(21:9) **THERE FOLLOWS: Come; I will shew thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.** **ANSWER:** By the **bride** and **wife** he means the Church, which, while remaining unstained, is always engendering spiritual children to God;

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or he may also call it so because it is now espoused to God, and is then to be led to the immortal nuptials.

(21:10/11) QUESTION: **And he took me up in spirit to a great mountain: and he shewed me the holy city Jerusalem.** ANSWER: After the fall of Babylon, **the holy city**, which is the bride of the Lamb, is seen on the **mountain**, for the *stone cut out of a mountain without hands* has broken *in pieces* the effigy of worldly glory, and has grown *into a great mountain, and filled the whole world*. [Dan. 2:34-35] THERE FOLLOWS: **Coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.** ANSWER: It will indeed appear more beautiful when, by the Spirit by which its bridegroom is believed to have been conceived and engendered, it has gained fully to have a heavenly appearance.

(21:12) QUESTION: **And it had a wall great and high.** ANSWER: That is, the impregnable firmness of faith, love, and hope. The Lord himself, protecting the Church on all sides, may also be taken to be the great wall, about which Isaiah says, *A wall and a bulwark shall be set therein*, [Is. 26:1] that is, the protection of the Lord and the intercession of the saints, who make a way for him to the hearts of believers by their teaching. THERE FOLLOWS: **Having twelve gates.** ANSWER: These **gates** are the apostles, who were the first, whether by their writings or by their works, to open the entrance to the Church for all nations.

(21:15) QUESTION: **And he that spoke with me, had a measure of a reed of gold.** ANSWER: Christ, who is the Father's wisdom, measures the holy city, because he

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distributes the gifts of spiritual graces to every one of the faithful while ordering *all things in number, and measure, and weight*. [Wis. 11:21] We may also understand it to mean the teachers of the Church, fragile in body but heavenly in mind, who cleverly examine the merits of everyone.

(21:16) THERE FOLLOWS: **And the city lieth in a foursquare.** ANSWER: The **city** is said to lie **in a foursquare** and to be laid out with an equal measure on every side, because it is not allowed to be marked by any inequality, for *to be perfect, to be of one mind, to have peace* (as the apostle says), [2 Cor. 13:11] is really to stand in the solidity of the cube. QUESTION: **And he measured the city for twelve thousand furlongs.** ANSWER: That is, he saw that the Church was perfect in faith and works, or he granted it to be so. Indeed perfection in the four cardinal virtues, sublimated by faith in the holy Trinity, constitutes the dignity of the Church as though by the number twelve. THERE FOLLOWS: **The length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal.** ANSWER: This is the solidity of the invincible truth, which does not let the Church, which relies on length of faith, breadth of love, and height of hope, be *carried about with every wind of doctrine*. [Eph. 4:14] If it lacks one of those qualities, the stability of the Church will not be perfect. He is indeed described as dividing in the constitution of the Church different gifts of virtues to *everyone according as he will*, [1 Cor. 12:11] and *the Spirit is given to every man unto profit*, [Ibid. 7] because it would be difficult for everyone to flourish with all virtues at the same time. My only son,¹⁸ let it be enough for me, complying in the above, step by step to this point,

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with your most humble request, to have run as much as my reins permitted me. However, since I endeavored above to explain mystically the twelve fathers and the twelve thousand signed as best I could, there now remains for me (as there is no doubt you would like to know about this as well) not to pass over the number or virtues of the precious stones in silence altogether (these stones being also found in numerous passages of the holy Scriptures, and also twelve in number), but to run over them as far as I can, so that the fire of the thirst of your mind and your suppliant request, as well as my effort, may come to an end. For in the aforesaid city, there are as ornaments its gates and measure, but in addition also ornaments of stones.

(21:19/20) **QUESTION: The first foundation of the city of God, that is the holy Church, was jasper.** **ANSWER:** There are many kinds of **jasper**: one is green and looks as though it were tinged with flowers; another is like snow and the foam of sea waves, and glows red as if they were mingled with blood. Therefore by the **jasper** is represented the unfading greenness of faith, which is imbued with the mystery of the Lord's Passion by the water of baptism and prepared for every flower of graces by its progressing merits, and can say with the bride, *My beloved is white and ruddy*. [Song 5:10] Whence it is right for both *the building of the wall* here [Rev. 21:18] and the *bulwarks* of the same city in Isaiah [Is. 54:12] to be fortified as well as adorned with this stone. **Second, sapphire.** Both this stone's color and its mystery were explained by Moses when he said, describing God's appearance, *under his feet as it were a work of sapphire stone*. [Ex. 24:10] It emits a burning radiance when hit by sunrays, because the minds of the

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saints, always intent on heavenly things, when renewed daily by the rays of the divine light, somehow the more devoutly and the more ardently search for eternal things and persuade others that they should investigate them. As for the fact that it is said to be found in the Red Sea, it means that it is by the Lord's passion and the bath of the sacred baptism that the minds of mortals are raised on high to enjoy heavenly things in advance. **Third, chalcedony.** **Chalcedony** shines palely like the fire of an oil lamp, and is bright in the open, but not indoors. By it are indicated those who, relying on their desire for heaven, hide however from men, and, as it were, do their fasts, alms, and prayers in secret, [Matt. 6:2-6/16-18] but, when ordered to come out to serve teaching or other interests of the saints, soon show what brightness they have been carrying inside. As for the fact that it is said to resist those who want to carve it, and to attract chaff to itself if made hot by sunrays or the rubbing of fingers, it rightly corresponds to such people as do not let their strength be overcome by anyone, but rather themselves bring every weaker person into the power of their light and ardor. It is said about one of these people, *He was a burning and a shining light* [John 5:35] — burning with love, shining in speech. They always take care that the light of their virtues and inner love should not run out of oil. **Chalcedony** is produced in the province of Ethiopia, so as to indicate that, as they are under the burning heat of love, but yet of obscure reputation, it is as if their skin were black and they appeared dirty. **Fourth, emerald.** **Emerald** is of an extreme greenness, to such a point that it beats green grass and foliage as well as all gems, tinging with green the air reflected around it. It improves when treated with pure and green oil, although it is colored by nature. It

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signifies the souls always green in faith, for the more they are tried by the adversity of the world, which is symbolized by the cold of Scythia, the more they strive both to picture mentally, in hoping for it, the unfading and eternal inheritance that is kept for them in heaven, and to share it widely with the people around them by preaching. This same stone's land of origin also matches these people in a very beautiful manner, being a rich but uninhabitable land, for, although it abounds in gold and gems, griffins hold everything there. They are very ferocious birds, or rather flying beasts, for they are four-footed, and in their bodies they are most similar to lions, whereas in their heads and wings they are most similar to eagles. They fight against the Arimaspi (who are said to be remarkable for having one eye in the middle of the forehead) in order to acquire these stones, the beasts stealing them and the Arimaspi keeping them both doing so with incredible eagerness.¹⁹ It is this land abounding in treasures of virtues that the Psalmist had gone to when he said, *Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abode in the wilderness.* [Ps. 54:8] You go far off flying away when you lift yourself up, in the high contemplation of God, away from the turmoil of temporal desires, and you abide in the wilderness when you persevere in your mind's retired intention. Against birds of this kind striving to snatch the seed of the divine Word away from us, all the saints (who are admirable for their simple intention proceeding from their desire for heaven, as though this were one eye) are watchful, so as to be able to search out and dig up the gem of faith and of all the other virtues; for the higher a virtue is, the fewer keepers it has, and the harder persecution it endures from unclean spirits, who, like the fearful griffins, are terrestrial with regards to

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the degraded state of their merits, but flying with regards to the proud loftiness of their minds, and struggle tirelessly to take spiritual riches away, not in order to possess them for their own use, but only for the sake of taking them away from men. Then, because such sublimity of faith became known to the world through the Gospel, it is fitting for the **emerald** to be put in the fourth place, because of the four books of the Gospel. **Fifth, sardonyx.** This stone, having the whiteness of onyx and the redness of sardius, was named **sardonyx** after both of them. There are very numerous kinds of it: one has the likeness of red earth; another is two-colored as if blood were shining through a human nail; another is three-colored: black in the bottom, white in the middle, bright red above. To this one are compared men who are red for their bodies' suffering, white for their spirits' purity, but despise themselves out of the humility of their minds, and testify with the apostle, *Though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*, [2 Cor. 4:16] as well as, *I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified.* [1 Cor. 4:4] Similarly, the Psalmist: *Although man hath the image of God* (because of the power of the mind), *yet he shall be disquieted in vain* (because of the weakness of the flesh). [Apparently a variant of Ps. 38:7] Since suffering is in the weakness of the body, for they that kill the body are not able to kill the soul; [Matt. 10:28] and since humility comes from the fragility of this same body, when it is said, *Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* [Rom. 7:24] it is right for **sardonyx** to be in the **fifth** foundation, for it is certain that our bodies work with five senses. **Sixth, sardius. Sardius,** which is entirely blood-colored, signifies the glory of

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martyrs, about which it is said, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*. [Ps. 115:15] It is well-placed in **sixth** position, since our Lord was both incarnated in the sixth age of the world and crucified for the whole world's salvation on the sixth day of the week. **Seventh, chrysolite**. The **chrysolite** stone shines like gold and has burning sparks. By its image are symbolized those who shine with the understanding of heavenly and true wisdom, and send words of exhortation, or even miraculous signs, like sparks of fire, to the people around them, and whose minds, as Arator says, are pressed by love, and in whose words ardor fiercely burns.²⁰ Since this is achieved only through the gift of spiritual grace, it is absolutely beautiful for **chrysolite** to be in the **seventh** foundation, for by the number seven is often symbolized the grace of the Holy Spirit, about which it is said above, *and from the seven spirits which are before his throne*. [Rev. 1:4] **Eighth, beryl**. **Beryl** is as if you looked at water hit by the brilliance of the sun reflect a beautiful red color. However, it does not glitter unless it is polished into a hexagonal shape, for it is by the reflection of the corners that its brilliance is enhanced. It signifies people who are intellectually acute, but yet more gleaming with the light of heavenly grace [...] ²¹ by similarity of color. Indeed Solomon is witness to the fact that water represents deepness of understanding, as he says, *Words from the mouth of a man are deep water*. [Prov. 18:4] However, human or even divine wisdom is not of a perfect brilliance if completion of works is not added thereto as well. Perfection of action is often represented by the number six, especially since the making of this world was completed in this number of days. As for the fact that **beryl** is said to scorch the hand of the one who holds it, it is undoubtedly

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clear that it is because whoever comes into close relation with a holy man is naturally reinvigorated by the fire of his good conduct. **Ninth, topaz.** The **topaz** stone is as costly as it is rare. It is said to have two colors, one like the purest gold, and the other shining out with ethereal brightness. It has a rosy richness and a modest purity; close to chrysoprase in size and color, it shines most when hit by the brilliance of the sun, surpassing the most precious brightnesses of all gems, and singularly provoking a most eager pleasure of the eye so that one cannot but look at it. If you seek to polish it, you darken it; if you leave it to its own nature, it shines. It is said to inspire even kings with wonder, so that they recognize that they possess nothing like it among their riches. Its absolutely beautiful natural quality is quite worthily compared to the grace of contemplative life, for holy kings, whose hearts are *in the hand of God*, [Prov. 21:1] deservedly prefer contemplative life to all riches of good works and all gems of virtues, directing the sight and acuteness²² of their pure minds to it most of all, embracing mentally the sweetness of heavenly life the more ardently, the more often they have been hit by the brilliance of celestial grace. So holy men have a golden color from the flame of inner love, and they have an ethereal color from the contemplation of heavenly sweetness, the latter color often being made to lose its quality by the whirlwind of this world as though by the rubbing of a file; for it is not easy for the mind to be at one and the same time distressed by earthly hardships, troubles, concerns, and pains, and contemplate the joys of heavenly life, delighting in a quiet state of mind. On the contrary, such a mind rather moans, and cries out, *My eye is troubled through indignation: I have grown old amongst all my*

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enemies. [Ps. 6:8] As for its being found on the Theban island called Topazion, which it is named after, it should be understood in two ways, because those regions (that is those of the Egyptians) are particularly abundant in groups of monks, and whoever lives next to the *Sun of justice* [Mal. 4:2] is naturally colored by rays of ethereal light. It is beautiful, just as perfection of active life was put in eighth position, for the gem of contemplative sweetness to be put in ninth position, whether because nine orders of angels, whose life contemplative life imitates, are found in the holy Scripture, or because contemplative life is only one step (the step of death, so to speak) away from the talent of perfect blessedness, after which the prophet sighed with immense longing and said, *Therefore have I loved thy commandments above gold and the topaz*, [Ps. 118:127] which means: Above the glory of any esteemed action and above all exaltation of contemplative joy that can exist in this world, I delighted in the sweetest love of your commandments; the first and foremost of which is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength*. [Mark 12:30] It is absolutely certain that this cannot be completely achieved anywhere but in that summit of heaven's kingdom. **Tenth, chrysoprase.** **Chrysoprase** is of a mix of green and gold; there is also one sort of it that has a purple gleam with golden spots at intervals. It is produced in India. It signifies those who, earning the greenness of the eternal fatherland by the brilliance of perfect love, also open it to others by the purple light of their martyrdom. Since they follow the example of the Lord in the flesh in that they despise this life and prefer eternal glory, it is now as if they displayed the brightness of their merits in India, that is, near the rising

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of the sun. As they wait with longing *to shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father* [Matt. 13:43] and to then reign with their King whom they are now suffering with, it is right for them to be put in tenth position, for by the penny²³ the cultivators of the Lord's vineyard are rewarded with, [Matt. 20:1 et seq.] is symbolized likeness to the eternal King, which they are to receive. Here, which was impossible in the ninth stage, the Decalogue will be thoroughly fulfilled, when love of God and neighbor is made perfect. **Eleventh, jacinth. Jacinth** is found in Ethiopia and has a dark bluish color. It is best when it is neither porous nor made dull by excessive density, but shines in the right balance between both, and has a sweetly purified luster. It does not always glow the same way, but changes with the face of the sky. In fine weather it is clear and attractive; in cloudy weather it grows faint and fades before your eyes. It represents the souls always devoted to heavenly intention and approaching somehow, as far as it is possible for mortals, the lifestyle of angels. They are those who are told to keep their hearts with all watchfulness, [Prov. 4:23] so that an excessive subtlety of understanding should not make them venture to seek things too high for them or inquire into things too powerful for them (for *the glory of the Lord is to conceal the word*, [Prov. 25:2] which means to exercise caution in philosophizing about God or man Christ), or so that, reversely, they should not become sluggish and thus fall back to the weak beginnings of faith and the mere basics of the start of the words of God; but so that, walking the kingly way, they should rather move forward protected *on the right and on the left by the armour of justice*, [2 Cor. 6:7] observe properly the conditions of the moment and change their faces with the sky, and say in

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their hearts, *For whether we be transported in mind, it is for God; or whether we be sober, it is for you.* [Ibid. 5:13] It is as if a **jacinth** spoke these words when surrounded by clouds: *You are not straitened in us, but in your own bowels you are straitened,* [Ibid. 6:12] as well as, *For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified;* [1 Cor. 2:2] and said this when seen in clear sunlight: *We speak wisdom among the perfect.* [Ibid. 6] **Twelfth, amethyst.** **Amethyst** is purple with a mixture of violet and a sheen like that of a rose, and it gently emits some sorts of little flames. However, there is something in its purple that is not quite fiery, but looks like red wine. Its purple ornament represents the condition of heaven's kingdom, while its rosy and violet ornaments represent the humble modesty and precious death of the saints; that is, those whose minds are lifted up in the highest considerations to a particular degree, even when from the outside you see them suffer abject things; who in the middle of adversity always keep in mind the Lord's promise: *Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom;* [Luke 12:32] who, sending out the flame of love not only one towards another, but even towards their own persecutors, implore down on their knees, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;* [Acts 7:59] and who, while drinking the cup of suffering, rather get drunk with the remembrance of the yoke of that wine which makes man's heart happy, which the Lord promised to drink new with his disciples in the kingdom of his Father. [Matt. 26:29, Mark 14:25] So, by **Jasper** is symbolized greenness of faith; by **sapphire**, highness of heavenly hope; and by **chalcedony**, the flame of inner love. By **emerald** is represented strong confession of the same faith

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in the middle of adversity; by **sardonyx**, the humility of the saints among their virtues; and by **sardius**, the venerable blood of martyrs. By **chrysolite** is denoted spiritual preaching among miracles; by **beryl**, the perfect work of preachers; and by **topaz**, the ardent contemplation of the same preachers. By **chrysoprase** is indicated both the work and the reward of blessed martyrs; by **jacinth**, the heavenly elevation of teachers to high things, and their humble descent to human things for the sake of the weak; and by **amethyst**, the memory of heaven's kingdom always in the minds of the humble. Each precious stone has been assigned to one foundation because although all the perfect people with whom the city of our God on his holy mountain is adorned and whom its foundations are made of are shining with the light of spiritual grace, yet to one, *by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge; to another, the grace of healing; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another, faith in the same spirit.* [1 Cor. 12:8-10] The builder and founder of that city, God, who is the foundation of foundations, and for us even deigned to become a high priest, so that he cleansed and inaugurated at the same time the walls of the same city with the sacrifice of his own blood, possesses as his own *all things whatsoever the Father has.* [John 16:15] Whence it was commanded that the same stones, also inscribed with the names of the patriarchs, be put on the high priest's breast, [Ex. 28:15-30] so that it be revealed by this most beautiful mystery that all the spiritual gifts that every one of the saints received individually and partially, had been made complete together and perfectly in the Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ as a man. I seem to have expounded these things about the precious

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stones perhaps more copiously than a brief style of interpretation required. The fact is that I needed to describe their natures and lands of origin carefully, and then to investigate their mystery more cleverly, while also following the order and stages. Yet, for what concerns the bottom of the matter, it seems to me that I have said very little, and this briefly and summarily. I humbly beg the reader to give thanks to God if he sees that I have walked the right path, and to pray the Lord with me to forgive my mistake if on the contrary he finds that it has not turned out as he wished. But enough with this; let us now return to what we had begun.

(21:21) THERE FOLLOWS: **And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.** ANSWER: He makes the streets of the same materials as those he had previously said the city was adorned with, for there are many people in the Church who, even leading a less strict and inferior life, are endowed with the greatest virtues, and shine with both purity of mind and the radiance of work.

(21:23) QUESTION: **And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it.** ANSWER: Because the Church is not guided by the light or elements of the world, but it is led through the darkness of the world by Christ, the eternal Sun. THERE FOLLOWS: **For the glory of God will enlighten it.** ANSWER: The light we shall enjoy in our fatherland is the same one by which we are now guided as we walk on the way. It is by the same light by which we have been taught to distinguish between good and evil that we shall then be made blessed and see only what is good.

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(21:24) QUESTION: **And the nations shall walk through the light of it.**²⁴ ANSWER: It means that it is the selfsame Lamb that is now the way for travelers and will then be the life for citizens. [Ref. to John 14:6]

(21:25) THERE FOLLOWS: **And the gates thereof shall not be shut by day: for there shall be no night there.** ANSWER: He is saying that there will be in that city the perpetual light of the Lamb, or rather that the Lamb himself will be there as a perpetual light, while nighttime will have been eliminated. As for the gates not being shut, it is a sign of the fullest security; for there it is no longer said, *Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation*, [Matt. 26:41, Mark 14:38] but rather, *Be still and see that I am God*. [Ps. 45:11]

(21:27) QUESTION: **Nor hath there entered into it anything defiled.** ANSWER: He is describing the Church of that time when, after the wicked have been excluded from among them, the good alone will reign with Christ. But already now, every unclean person and liar is not in the Church, nor does the one who hates the city of God see its light, *because the darkness hath blinded his eyes*. [1 John 2:11] It is not here, but there that there will be the true healing of the nations, full redemption, and everlasting happiness.

HERE ENDS THE PART ON THE APOCALYPSE²⁵

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Finally, after having at last finished so great and so perilous a work, I beg with insistence, that if any people should deem this little work of mine worth reading, they should also remember to commend the author of the work to the Lord. I have actually quoted a good number of things from the teaching of the masters or from what I remembered from my readings — for we also have as a commandment that we should give back to our lord the talents we received, with the interests. Concerning the knowledge of numbers [...] also a few things [...] different number [...] Bede says [...] ²⁶ is divided into seven sections; and in the fifth rule mentioned in his preface, he says that the trope works with regular numbers, in the trope called synecdoche, where either the whole is meant by a part or a part by the whole. This figure of speech even gives us the solution to that famous question of Christ's resurrection: for unless the last part of the day on which he suffered his Passion is taken as a whole day, that is, including also the previous night; and unless the night in the last part of which he was resurrected is taken as a whole day, that is, including also the then-dawning Dominical day, there cannot be three days and three nights, the time during which he said he would be *in the heart of the earth*. [Matt. 12:40] He calls “regular numbers” those the holy Scripture commends more notably, like seven, ten, or twelve. By these is usually represented either totality of time or perfection of a certain thing, as for example, as already said, ²⁷ *Seven times a day I have given praise to thee* [Ps. 118:164] means nothing else but *His praise shall be always in my mouth*. [Ps. 33:2] What is the number seven taken to mean but the sum of perfection? So the number seven is called perfect because it is made up of the first even

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number and the first odd number: the first that can be divided and the first that cannot be divided. This is actually why twelve apostles were chosen to be filled with the perfection of the sevenfold grace, for there is a rising from the number seven to the number twelve: when the number seven undergoes a multiplication of its parts by each other, it stretches to the number twelve: for whether four is multiplied by three or three by four, they turn seven into twelve. Therefore, since the holy apostles were being sent to preach the Trinity in the four parts of the world, twelve apostles were chosen, so that they might show by their number also the perfection they preached with their lives and voices. Here you are; you have both, the fulfillment of your request and of your wish.²⁸ As far as time and place have allowed me to, with God's favor, I have complied willingly, instructed by the apostle, who tells us to *be ready to satisfy everyone that asks*. [1 Pet. 3:15] I know him who says, *Open thy mouth, and I will fill it*. [Ps. 80:11] Let us hasten to walk while it is light; the night will come, when no one can walk. [Cf. John 9:4] Let us imitate him about whom it is written, *fearing God, and avoiding evil*. [Job 1:1]

ON THE BOOK OF JOB²⁹

To fear God is to fail to do none of the good actions one ought to do, as it is written: *He that feareth God, neglecteth nothing*; [Eccl. 7:19] nor indeed are good actions pleasing to God when they are defiled before his eyes with an admixture of evils. Then, to bless God (that is, to curse him) [Ref. to Job 1:5] is to grant oneself the glory of a gift

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from him. Whence the Lord did well to wash the feet of the holy apostles after preaching, his purpose being to show clearly that even when engaged in good work one often gets a layer of sin dust on one's feet, and the soles of those who speak are soiled through the same action through which the hearts of those who listen are washed, for it often happens that some people, when they speak words of exhortation, exalt themselves inwardly (however slightly) because the grace of purification comes through them; and when they wash away the deeds of others with their words, they take on the dust of evil thought as one takes on dust from a good journey. What could have been said more admirably about a holy man than *simple and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil*? [Job 1:1] Whoever desires the eternal fatherland doubtless lives simple and upright: simple in work, upright in faith; simple in the good actions he performs below, upright in the most elevated matters he feels on the inside. There are indeed some people who are not simple in the good actions they do, as they do not seek through them a reward inside, but favor outside. These are also those to whom it is said, *Woe to the sinner that goeth on the earth two ways*. [Sir. 2:14] For a sinner goes on the earth two ways when what he shows in work belongs to God, while what he seeks in thought belongs to the world. Therefore we read that the eighty men from Sichem, Silo, and Samaria carrying offerings to the house of the Lord died in the midst of the city, [Jer. 41:5-7] because, if the minds devoted to divine works do not guard themselves very carefully, the enemy comes as a thief, and they lose their lives on the very way as they carry the offering of devotion. From the hand of this enemy one cannot escape unless one quickly has recourse to penitence. *But ten men*

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were found among them, that said to Ismahel: Kill us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and barley, and oil, and honey, and he did not kill them. [Ibid. 8] A treasure in the field is hope in penitence. Since it is invisible, it is as if it were kept buried in the earth of the heart. Therefore those who had treasures were saved because those who turn to lamenting their fault after they have been guilty of incautiousness do not die even if they are caught. Here is a very sweet consolation, my only son.³⁰ Now, when the old enemy neither was there in the beginning of intention nor intercepts you on the way of action, he stretches more dangerous snares in the end, and he occupies it the more wickedly as he sees it is the only place left where he may still deceive you. These snares set in the end of his way are what had been seen by him who said, *They were watching my heel.* [Variant of Ps. 55:7]³¹ Indeed, since the end of the body is in the heel, what is indicated by the latter but the end of an action? Therefore, either evil spirits or all wicked men, who are their followers in pride, will watch your heel when they wish to spoil the end of a good action. That is also why it is said to the same serpent, *She shall watch thy head, and thou her heel.* [Variant of Gen. 3:15] To watch the serpent's head is to see the beginnings of his incitement. Yet, even when he is detected from the start, he endeavors to strike your heel, because even if he does not strike in the intention with his first incitement, he strives to deceive you in the end. If, on the other hand, your heart is corrupted in the intention, as soon as that happens, the middle and end of the ensuing action are securely possessed by the cunning enemy, since he sees the whole tree bear fruit for him after he has spoiled it in the root with his venom. Therefore we must be extremely watchful so as to prevent our minds

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from being stained with base intention even when they devote themselves to good works, because the good done on the outside is nothing if the sacrifice of innocence is not immolated for it on the inside before the eyes of God on the altar of the heart. Therefore we must endeavor with all our might to see if the river of our work flows pure from the spring of our thought. We must employ all care in protecting the eye of the heart from the dust of wickedness, so that it should not pervert within itself through the fault of wrong intention what right it displays to people in its action. Therefore we must take care that our good actions should not be few, and we must take care that they should not be left unexamined, so that we should not be found to be either unproductive if we do few, or foolish if we leave them unexamined. A virtue taken individually is not truly a virtue if it is not mixed with other virtues; whence it is rightly said to Moses, *Take unto thee spices, stacte, etc., and thou shalt make incense compounded, well-tempered together, and pure*; [Ex. 30:34-35] for we make incense compounded from spices when we give off a smell of multiplicity of virtues on the altar of good work. This incense is made tempered and pure because the more virtue is joined to virtue, the purer is the incense of good work produced. Then we *grind all the spices into very small powder* [Ibid. 36] when we beat our good actions, as it were, with the pestle of our heart, in a secret examination, and review them minutely to see if they are truly good. Therefore we should take care, when we overcome evils, not to be overthrown because our good actions are undisciplined; we should take care that they not be performed inconstantly, that they not be intercepted due to heedlessness, that they not depart from the way through

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error, or be broken by weariness and lose the merit of the effort previously made. Indeed the mind must guard itself vigilantly in all things, and persevere in the foresight of its guard. In vain indeed does one do good if one gives it up before the end of one's life, for it is also in vain that one runs fast if one stops before reaching the finishing line. That is why Joseph, who is described as having remained just until the end among his brothers, is the only one to be said to have had a tunic reaching to the ankles; [Gen. 37:23]³² indeed, what does a tunic reaching to the ankles mean but completed action? For when good action covers us before the eyes of God until the end of our life, it is as if a tunic hanging down covered our body's heel. This is why a commandment is given by Moses that the rump of the victim be offered on the altar: [Ex. 29:22; Lev. 3:9, 7:3] it means that when we start anything good, we should persevere until the end and complete it. Therefore the good things we have started need to be worked at every day, so that, when evil is driven away by fight, the very victory of good may be held by the hand of constancy. There are two ways the whole world is ruled: by the will of God, and by his permission. So everything he wants happens, and he permits some things to happen that he does not want. Now one should know that Satan's will is always unjust, but that his power is sometimes just, because he has got his will from himself, but his power from the Lord; for what Satan himself unjustly seeks to do, God permits to happen only justly. When we suffer unwanted things in this life, we must turn the aspirations of our will to him who cannot want anything unjust. Then if we know that what is just pleases the Lord, and if we can suffer nothing but what pleases the Lord, everything we suffer is just, and it is very

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unjust if we complain of just suffering. There are indeed two ways in which we can commit an offense with our lips: [Ref. to Job 2:10] when we say unjust things or when we leave just things unsaid. For if holding one's peace were not sometimes a fault too, the prophet would not say, *Woe is me, because I have held my peace*; [Is. 6:5] and, as some poet said,³³ enemies quarreling with you are sometimes more useful than friends who are afraid to reprove you. There is also something in the Devil's cunning (which manifests itself in countless ways) that we must guard against: often, after the old enemy has inflicted the struggle of temptations on our mind, he withdraws from his own struggle for a time, not to put an end to his evil trick against us, which remains inextricable, but to come back suddenly and break into our hearts unexpectedly, the more easily as he made them feel secure by giving them respite. When the divine kindness forsakes us, although we are unworthy, it does so while still guarding us, and it guards us while still letting us experience critical moments of temptation so as to show us the condition of our weakness. A perfect mind employs clever vigilance not only to refuse to do wrong things, but also to cleanse everything shameful that is produced in it by its thoughts. However, war often arises from victory itself, in such a way that, when an unclean thought is overcome, the mind of the victor is assailed by pride. Therefore the mind must be lifted up by cleanness while still taking care to lay itself down in humility. If pride assails someone's mind, let them hasten to sit on a dunghill. [Ref. to Job 2:8] To sit on a dunghill means to feel worthless and abject. To sit on a dunghill means to repent and turn the eyes of our mind back to the forbidden things we have done, so that, seeing the dung of our sins in front

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of us, we may bring down all trace of pride that arises in our mind. Someone sits on a dunghill when they anxiously take account of their weakness, and do not take pride for the good they have received through grace. We should doubtless inquire into this matter: while divine judgments are very mysterious, as to why in this life things sometimes go badly for the good and well for the wicked, God's judgments are still more mysterious when things go well for the good and badly for the wicked; for when things go badly for the good and well for the wicked, one may perhaps understand that, if the good have committed any offense, they receive their punishment here in order that they be more fully freed from eternal damnation; and that the wicked find here the good things that are useful for this life, in order that they be dragged only to torments in the future. About these latter people the prophet said with painful wonder, *Behold these are sinners; and yet abounding in the world they have obtained riches*. [Ps. 72:12] That is also why it is said to the rich man burning in hell, *Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazareth evil things*. [Luke 16:25] Now, when things go well here for the good and badly for the wicked, it becomes very uncertain whether the good are receiving good things in order that they be provoked to evolve towards something yet better, or whether, by a just and hidden judgment, they receive here the recompense for their works in order that they be deprived of the rewards of the next life; and whether hardships are falling on the wicked in order to correct them and protect them from eternal torments, or whether their punishment starts here to be eventually completed and lead them to the ultimate torments of Gehenna. Therefore, since among divine

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judgments the human mind is oppressed by the heavy darkness of its incertitude, when holy men see that they have the prosperity of this world, they are troubled by a fearful suspicion: for they are afraid of receiving here the fruit of their efforts; they are afraid that divine justice may see a hidden wound in them, and that, while it heaps them with external gifts, it may drive them away from the inner ones. Now, when they silently recollect that the only reason why they do good things is to please the Lord alone, and that they do not exult in the abundance of their prosperity, they are naturally less afraid that their prosperity may have to do with hidden judgments against them, but they are still vexed about this prosperity, because it impedes them in their inmost intention, and they are annoyed at the blandishments of this life, because they are not unaware that they are bound to delay and hinder them in their inner desire. Indeed in this world honor gives rise to more preoccupations than contempt does, and the sublimity of prosperity is a heavier burden than the adversity of want; for with the latter, sometimes, when a man is oppressed outwardly by it, he is left freer to desire the things that are within; whereas with the former, as the mind is forced to comply with many considerations, it is kept from the course of its desire. As a result, holy men are more afraid of success in this world than of adversity, for they know that when the mind is overwhelmed by a seductive occupation, it is sometimes willingly diverted to external matters; they know that often, a hidden thought deceives the mind in such a way that it does not know how it is being transformed. Furthermore, they consider what are the eternal things they desire, and they realize how insignificant is all that seductively smiles at you

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temporally. When time smiles at them, they despise it and attribute it no importance. The world in its flower runs behind them as they flee from it, but of course they, whom Christ is the life, the glory, and the own comfort of, do not care about it, and tread it underfoot. Their minds are annoyed at all success in this world because they are stricken with love for heavenly happiness, and they are the more roused to despise the present sweetness as they see that this sweetness is furtively trying to entice them to disdain eternal glory. This is indeed why Job says, *Why is there light given to a miserable man?* [Job 3:20] In the sacred Scripture, this world's prosperity is sometimes indicated by the name of light, and its adversity by the name of night. That is also why it is said by the Psalmist, *The darkness thereof, and the light thereof are alike*; [Ps. 138:12] for since holy men despise the prosperity of the world and tread it underfoot just as they tread its adversity underfoot and endure it, they put both the adversity of the world and its success under them by their great loftiness of mind, and they say, *The darkness thereof, and the light thereof are alike*, as if they were overtly saying, "Just as the hardships thereof do not overwhelm the strength of our intention, so do the blandishments thereof not corrupt it either." Holy men, who realize that they are miserable in the distress of this exile, avoid gaining renown in its prosperity. For light is given to miserable men when those who, contemplating elevated things, realize that they are miserable in this journey away from home, receive the splendor of transitory prosperity, and, while they feel great sorrow because they are slow to go back to their fatherland, are forced on top of that to bear the burdens of honor. Love for eternal things crushes them, and glory from temporal

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things smiles at them. When they think about what are the things they possess among the lowest things, and what are the things they do not see of the elevated things; what are the things that sustain them on the earth, and what they have lost of heavenly things, they are bitten by sorrow at their prosperity, because even though they see that they are by no means altogether overwhelmed by it, they still realize that their thought is divided between the love of the Lord and his plan. Whence, when he says, *why is there light given to a miserable man*, he rightly adds directly afterwards, *and life to them that are in bitterness of soul*. [Job 3:20] Indeed all the elect are in bitterness of soul, because they either keep being punished in bewailing the faults they have committed, or afflict themselves with great sorrow because they have been exiled here far away from the face of the Creator, and are not yet in the joys of the eternal fatherland. About their hearts it is well said by Solomon, *The heart that knoweth the bitterness of his own soul, in his joy the stranger shall not intermeddle*. [Prov. 14:10] For the hearts of the reprobates are in bitterness too, because they are even afflicted by their own perverse desires; but they are not aware of this bitterness, because, voluntarily blinded, they are unable to realize what they are suffering; but the hearts of the good, on the other hand, know their bitterness, because they understand the misfortune of the exile into which they have been thrown and in which they are being torn with pain, and they perceive how peaceful are the things they have lost, and how troubled are those they have fallen into. But such a bitter heart is eventually brought back to its joy, and the stranger does not intermeddle in its joy, because he who now throws himself out of this sorrow of the heart by his

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desires, will then remain shut out from its inward celebration. So those who are in bitterness of soul absolutely long to die to the world, in order that, just as they desire nothing in the world, they may then be bound with no obligation by the world. Whence Paul, wanting his disciples to live, proclaims, *For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God.* [Col. 3:3] Therefore he who seeks death rejoices when he has found the grave, [Ref. to Job 3:21-22] because he who desires to mortify himself is very glad when he has found the respite of contemplation, so that he can keep out of sight, dead to the world, and hide from all the troubles of external matters within the bosom of inner love. Then he who seeks a treasure rejoices when he has found the grave, because when we turn the pages of the sacred Scripture in search of wisdom, when we study the examples of those who came before us, it is as if we took joy from the grave, because we find mental riches among the dead; because those who are perfectly dead to this world are resting with riches in secret. Therefore one is made rich by the grave when one is lifted up in the power of contemplation by the examples of the just. Blessed Job also says, *To a man whose way is hidden.* [Ibid. 23] Indeed his way is hidden from man, because even if he already perceives in what quality of life he is, he does not know yet what end he is heading towards; even if he already desires the things of above, even if he seeks them with the utmost desire, he does not know yet if he is going to stay in the same desire. For when we give up sins, we head for justice, and we know where we come from, but we do not know where we will get to in the end. See, my only son,³⁴ how uncertain and perilous this life is, in which no one can feel secure, because the feeling of secureness is the mother of

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negligences. We know what we were yesterday, but we do not know what we shall turn out to be tomorrow. Therefore his way is hidden from man because he sets the foot of work without being able to foresee the outcome of its completion, and because sometimes we do not know whether those very things we think we are doing right are right for the examination of the strict Judge. For often, our work is the cause of our damnation while it is thought to be a progress in virtue; often, what we think will placate the Judge provokes him to anger when he was well-disposed; as it is written, *There is a way which seemeth right to men: but the ends thereof lead to death.* [Prov. 14:12] Therefore, when holy men overcome evils, they fear even their good actions, lest they be deceived by the appearance of an action when they seek to do good things, lest a deadly fluid of rottenness be hidden under the appearance of a good color; for they know that, being still burdened by the weight of decay, they are unable to distinguish with precision what is good, and when they picture to themselves the rule of the last examination, they sometimes fear within themselves even the things they approve, and, while they desire them with all their minds within, yet, filled with alarm at their incertitude, they do not know where they are walking to. Finally, he says that God surrounds man with darkness, [Job 3:23] because even if a man is burning with desire for heaven, on the inside he does not know what has been ordained concerning himself, and he greatly fears that something concerning himself that now escaped him even in the desire of his good fervor, should come against him in the judgment. Is one not surrounded with darkness when one for the most part does not remember the past, cannot find out about the future, and

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hardly knows the present? Naturally, when we consider attentively this darkness of our blindness, we rouse our mind to lamentations. For the mind wails the blindness it suffers from on the outside, if it humbly remembers that it is deprived of light on the inside, and if it stirs itself up with all the effort of its intention, and, now that it has been driven away from the heavenly light, seeks that light which it had abandoned after being created. *In my bed by night*, it says, *I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, and found him not.* [Song 3:1] The bridegroom hides when he is being sought, in order to be sought the more ardently if he is not found; and the seeking bride is kept waiting and prevented from finding, in order that, her slowness having made her more capable of receiving it, she may eventually find what she was seeking, and many times as much. *Before I eat*, he says, *I sigh.* [Job 3:24] He sighs before he eats because he is first affected by the pain of tribulation, and is afterwards satiated by the food of contemplation. Indeed if he does not sigh, he does not eat, because if he does not humble himself in this exile through lamentations for his desire for heaven, he does not taste the joys of the eternal Fatherland; for those who rejoice in the indigence of this journey away from home are deprived of the food of truth. On the other hand, he who eats sighs, because those who are affected by love for the truth are also fed by the food of contemplation. The prophet was sighing and eating when he said, *My tears have been my bread*;³ for the soul is fed by its mourning when it is lifted up to heavenly joys by crying, and endures within itself the sorrow of its suffering, but receives food to be refreshed by because the strength of love pours forth through its tears. Therefore, when the elect put the divine judgments before the eyes of their minds;

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when they are afraid of a secret sentence concerning them; when they trust that they can reach God, but yet are afraid that they may not reach him; when they recall things of their past that they regret; when they are very scared of the things that are yet to come for them, because they do not know them; it is as if some sort of overflowing of waters were flowing in them. [Ref. Job 3:24] Therefore the just regret, fear, and torment themselves with great lamentations, because they are afraid of being forsaken; and although they are glad to be corrected, correction itself troubles their fearful minds, because they fear that the evil they endure should not be a benevolent stroke for the sake of discipline, but a just punishment for vengeance. Reflecting well on this, the Psalmist says, *Who knoweth the power of thy anger?* [Ps. 89:11] For the power of divine anger cannot be comprehended by our mind, because his plan, the arrangements concerning us being obscure, often receives us by that by which it is thought to forsake us, and abandons us by that by which it is believed to receive us, so that what is called anger often becomes grace, and what is thought to be grace is sometimes anger. For there are those whom chastisements correct, and there are those whom they lead to the madness of impatience. There are some whom prosperity keeps from insanity because it soothes them, and there are others for whom it utterly destroys all hope of conversion because it makes them proud. Vices bring all down to the bottom, but yet some people come back from vices the more easily as they are more deeply ashamed of having fallen into them. Virtues always lift you up on high, but sometimes, as some people conceive pride because of their virtue, they fall down through the very path of their ascent. Therefore, since the power of divine

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anger is absolutely unknown, it is necessary for us to fear in all things without interruption; for in order for someone's deeds to be worthier, they must always look unworthy to him within himself, so that the good action should not make the heart of its doer proud, and should not, by making it proud, throw the action's author down due to pride, perhaps more than it helped those for whom it was done. The elect, even those in power, are quiet [Ref. to Job 3:26] when they interrupt the noise of earthly actions and lay them aside for the love of God, so that their hearts should not completely fall from the most elevated matters as the lowest matters occupied them incessantly; for they know that the mind is never lifted up to the things of above if it is continuously occupied in the things of below with a tumult of concerns. Indeed, what knowledge of God can the mind obtain when it is occupied, since even when it is at leisure it is hard put to it to grasp anything concerning him? These words by the Psalmist are right: *Be still and see that I am God*, [Ps. 45:11] because the one who fails to be still for God, hides the light of God's sight from himself by his own decision. Therefore those who are occupied with temporal matters manage external matters well only when they anxiously seek refuge in inner matters, when they have no love for the noise of agitation outside, but rest within themselves in the bosom of tranquility. Every man, for the very reason that he is a man, ought to understand his Creator, and he serves his Creator's will the more, the more he realizes that, by himself, he is nothing. Yet, after we were created, we failed to reflect on God. We were given commandments: we would not obey the commandments either. We were given examples in addition: we also refused to follow them. So, as man was in error, he was

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given the law. Then, as he persevered in his error even under the law, there was brought to him the testimony of those who are outside the law. All this in order that, since, after being created, we refused to keep in line with the condition of our creation, we might be warned by the commandments, and in order that, since we disdained to obey the commandments, we might feel ashamed at the examples — not, as already said, the examples of those who were bound by the law, but of those who had no law to keep them from sin. Divine providence has surrounded us; it has encircled our excuses. The access to human tergiversation has been shut on all sides. May the same divine providence that has wisely shut up our excuses also defend, watch over, and give strength to our weakness. To him is glory, honor, and power forever and ever. Amen. Receive and take eagerly this work of mine, and refresh your weary stomach at this table. Read this work, write it, drink it, and eat it. Sleep and rest in these waters.

Bathe in this page — these indeed are charming meadows. This is the remedy for the pains of your wounds; this is the fulfillment of your troublesome request; this is the reflection of your³⁵ mind and the path of your intention. May you be as healthy as I want, as strong as I wish, and as thriving as I desire. May Christ grant you to live happy, son. I pray. Lamb of God, who took away all the sins of the world, kindly keep my rest from the enemy.

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NOTES

- (1) This sentence was taken, only slightly modified, from Gregory, but « of a son » was added in such a way as to create a rather strange contradiction with « fraternal heart ».
- (2) In the Latin, the letters of the word « only » have been intentionally mixed up. See the « mystery » of the manuscript mentioned in my foreword.
- (3) Cf. 1.1 in the previous commentary, and note (3) on p.5.
- (4) There may be a mistranscription in the Latin and « love » may have been originally intended, as the Latin words look similar.
- (5) The letters of « son » have been intentionally mixed up in the Latin. See my foreword.
- (6) There is here a sentence too corrupt to be made any sense of.
- (7) $10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1,000$.
- (8) Prov. 13:8. The Latin word translated as « life » here can also mean « soul ».
- (9) The Latin word for « earthquake » means literally « earth motion/motion of earth ».
- (10) Cf. Matt. 3:2, 4:17, 10:7. Only one letter differs in Latin between « is at hand » and « will be at hand », so it could be a scribal mistake.
- (11) Augustinus Hipponensis, De mendacio, PL 40
- (12) [We should ask... the Old Testament] This part is from Alcuin.
- (13) See note on the commentary 12:9.
- (14) Augustinus Hipponensis, De civitate Dei, 20, 8, 2. (PL 41, 70)
- (15) Reference to baptism.
- (16) « Christ », χριστός (Christos) in Greek, means « anointed ». In Latin, the same word, *christi*, can mean both « of Christ » and « christs »; I do not know whether the commentator may have taken it as the latter in this verse, thus understanding it as « they shall be saints/priests of God and christs ».
- (17) Freely in Latin = *gratis*. See note (5) on 1:4-5 in the first commentary. « By graces » could be another literal interpretation of *gratis*.
- (18) The letters of « my only son » have been intentionally mixed up in the Latin. See my foreword.
- (19) According to the poem attributed to Aristeas (of Prokonnesos), above the Issedonians "dwelt the Arimaspi, men with one eye; still further, the gold-guarding Griffins." [Herod. 4.13] Archaeologia, Or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity, Volume 48, Part 2; Volume 48, Part 11; pg. 359. The Society, 1885.
- (20) Arator Subdiaconus, De Actibus Apostolorum, liber primus.
- (21) There is an undecipherable word here in the MS.
- (22) The Latin word I rendered by « acuteness » can mean, among other things, both sight or glance/look and intellectual acuteness.
- (23) The Latin word for « penny » is the same as the one for « the number ten »: *denarius*, because one *denarius* was originally worth ten asses.
- (24) The Latin could also be interpreted as « of him »; there would be no difference.
- (25) This is written in the right margin in the MS.
- (26) Many words in the MS here are unreadable to me.

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- (27) This has not in fact been said...
- (28) Doubtful sentence.
- (29) This is written in the right margin in the MS (fol. 24r).
- (30) The letters of « my only son » have been intentionally mixed up in the Latin. See my foreword.
- (31) Variant of Ps. 55:7, or a mistranscription — only one letter differs in Latin between « they will watch » and « they were watching ».
- (32) Gen. 37:23; « tunic reaching to the ankles » is the literal meaning of the Latin words translated in the D-R as « outside coat ».
- (33) Cf. Catonem apud Cic. Lael.
- (34) Same as in note 30.
- (35) Possibly a mistake of the scribe for « my »?

Explanatio Apocalypsis per Interrogationem et
Responsionem

MS; Munich, B.S. Clm 13581, folios 3r-31r

Transcribed by

Sarah Van Der Pas

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS MANUAL/LATIN

PREFACE

[fol. 3r] Deuotissima ac inextricabilis et, ut ita dixerim, obstinata petitio tua inportune aures nostrae paruitatis pulsare minime desistit quin animo dolenti tuo nonnulla, permoti compassionis affectu, quoniam bene pensare nouit animum dolentis¹ condiscensio passionis, scribere studeamus, unde mens affecta consolari queat; sed repente inter formidinem deuotionemque, praecibus uidelicet tuis uictus tandem, ac² depraehensus, cum in Largitorem munerum oculos mentis adtollerem, cunctatione postposita, ilico certus adtendi quia impossibile esse non poterat quod de fraterno mihi corde caritas nati imperabat. Forte³ quippe idoneum ad haec me disperaui, sed ipsa mei desperatione robustior, ad illum spem protinus erexi per quem aperta est lingua mutorum [Is. 35:6.], et qui linguas infantium facit dissertas [Wis. 10:21], qui inmensos brutosquae asinae ruditus per sensatos humani conloquii distinxit modos [Num. 22:28]. Quid igitur mirum si intellectum stulto homini praebeat, qui ueritatem suam, cum uoluerit, etiam per ora iumentorum narrat? Huius ergo robore considerationis accinctus, ariditatem⁴ meam ad⁵ explandam⁶ dumtaxat tuae iussionis uoluntatem, torpentem animum excitauit laborique operam dedi, nihilominus existimans quia fraternus labor amoris cedit et facit propter nullum; et quamuis illius⁷ a quo hoc agere cogor longe me uita transcenderet, iniuriosum [fol. 3v] tamen esse non credidi si fluenta usibus hominum plumbi fistula ministraret. Nam, sicut Gregorius papa dicit, quisquis ergo de Deo loquitur curet necesse est ut quicquid audientium mores instruit rimetur, et hunc⁸ rectum loquendi ordinem deputet si, cum oportunitas aedificationis exigit, ab eo se quod loqui coeperat diriuet utiliter. Sacri enim tractator Eloquii morem fluminis debet imitari. Fluuius quippe dum per alueum defluit, si ualles concauas ex latere contingit, in eas protinus sui impetus⁹ cursum diuertit; cumque illas sufficienter impleuerit, repente se in alueum refundit. Sic

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nimirum, sic diuini uerbi esse tractator debet, ut, cum de qualibet re disserit, si fortasse iuxta positam occasionem congruae aedificationis inuenerit, quasi ad uicinam uallem linguae undas intorqueat, et, cum subiunctae instructionis campum sufficienter infuderit, ad sermonis propositi alueum recurrat.¹⁰ Diuinus etenim Sermo, sicut in mysteriis prudentes exercet, sic plerumque superficiae¹¹ simplices refouet. Habet in publico unde paruulos nutriet; seruat in secreto unde mentes sublimium in admiratione suspendat. Quasi quidam quippe est fluuius, ut ita dixerim, planus et altus, in quo et agnus ambulet et elefans natet.¹² Hunc nostrae non ex nobis, sed ex peritorum patrum fonte paruitatis haustum, nocturnum uidelicet laborem, recensendum tuae mansuetudini, non quia uelut dignam¹³ debui, sed quia [fol. 4r] te petente memini promisisse, transmissi, typicas nimirum oppacatasque¹⁴ Apocalipsin paruas quaestiones. In quibus quicquid tua tepidum uigilantia incultumque reppererit, tantum mihi celerrime indulgeat, quanto hoc me aegrum dicere non ignorat. Nam dum molestia corpus adteritur, affecta mente etiam studia languescunt scribendi. Horis momentisque omnibus stomachi uirtute lassisco; lentis quidem sed tamen continuis corporis doloribus anhelio.¹⁵ Et idcirco, quicquid scribendi legendique studio inchoauerim, finem desidero. Sicut quidam ait, ita igitur libri termino reficitur lectoris intentio, sicut labor uiatoris hospitio. Nam et aperte magis breuitas quam disputatio prolixa memoriae solet infigi.¹⁶ Uis, nate niuce¹⁷, ut ex fonte didascalorum, quod utique nouis haud sine labore explicare ualeam, pateram haurire me teque sitientem exhibere, scilicet ut ea quae fors animum mouent tuum in eorum dictis rimando enucleatius simplici sermone soluerem. Verba enim Apocalipsis, sicut et cetera sacra Eloquia, in quibusdam locis sunt aperta, in quibusdam clausa; in quibusdam mystica ac figurata, in quibusdam iuxta faciliorem sensum, secundum litteram intellegenda. Et hoc ideo ut in occultioribus exerceantur ingeniosi, in euidentioribus reficiantur simplices, ut et cibus noster sit

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Sermo Dei in mysticis, qui spiritali dente ruminatus ¹⁸ ad interiora sensus dirigatur, et potus in **[fol. 4v]** manifestis, qui absque ullo adnitu ruminationis sola lectione quasi quodam poculo ad reficienda interiora mentis mittatur. Scriptura sacra mentis oculis quasi quoddam speculum opponitur, ut interna nostra facies in ipsa uideatur. Ibi enim foeda, ibi pulchra nostra cognoscimus; ibi sentimus quantum proficimus, ibi a profectu quam longe distamus.¹⁹ « Ibant », inquit historia, « filii eius, et faciebant conuiuium per domus unusquisque in die suo » [Job 1:4]. Filii conuiuium per domus faciunt, dum uirtutes singulae iuxta modum propriam²⁰ mentem pascunt.²¹ Dies enim uniuscuiusque filii est inluminatio uniuscuiusque uirtutis. Ut enim haec ipsa dona breuiter septiformis gratiae replicem, alium diem habet sapientia, alium intellectus, alium consilium, alium fortitudo, alium scientia, alium pietas, alium timor. Neque enim hoc est sapere quod intellegere, quia multi aeterna quidem sapiunt, sed haec intellegere nequaquam possunt. Sapientia²² ergo in die suo conuiuium facit, quia mentem de aeternorum spe et certitudine reficit. Intellectus in die suo conuiuium parat, quia in eo quod audita penetrat, reficiendo cor tenebras eius inlustrat. Consilium in die suo conuiuium exhibet, quia dum esse praecipitem inhibet, ratione animum replet. Fortitudo in die suo conuiuium facit, quia dum aduersa non metuit, trepidanti menti cibos confidentiae apponit. **[fol. 5r]** Scientia in die suo conuiuium parat, quia in uentre mentis ignorantiae ieiunium superat. Pietas in die suo conuiuium exhibet, quia cordis uiscera misericordiae operibus replet. Timor in die suo conuiuium facit, quia dum praemit mentem ne de praesentibus superbiat, de futuris illam spei cibo confortat. Sed illud in hoc filiorum conuiuio perscrutandum uideo, quod semetipsos inuicem pascunt. Ualde enim singula quaelibet destituitur, si non una alia uirtus uirtute suffragetur. Minor quippe est sapientia si intellectu careat, et ualde inutilis intellectus est si ex sapientia non subsistat, quia cum altiora sine sapientiae

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pondere penetrat, sua illum leuiter²³ grauius ruiturum leuat. Uile est consilium cui robur fortitudinis deest, quia quod tractando inuenit carens uiribus usque ad perfectionem operis non perducit; et ualde fortitudo destituitur nisi per consilium fulciatur, quia quo plus se posse conspicit, eo uirtus sine rationis moderamine deterius in praeceptis ruit. Nulla est scientia si utilitatem pietatis non habet, quia dum bona cognita exsequi²⁴ negligit, sese ad iudicium artius stringit. Et ualde inutilis est pietas si scientiae discretione caret, quia dum nulla hanc scientia inluminat, quomodo misereatur ignorat. Timor quoque ipse nisi has etiam uirtutes habuerit, ad nullam²⁵ opus procul dubio bonae actionis surgit, quia dum ad cuncta trepidat, ipsa sua formidine a bonis omnibus torpens [fol. 5v] uacat.²⁶ Cedendum est prophetam consulentem: « Intra in cubacula tua, claude ostia tua » [Is. 26:20]. Cubacula quippe ingredimur cum secreta nostrae mentis intramus; ostia autem claudimus cum desideria inlicita coercemus.²⁷ Nam quam difficiles sint quaestiones praefatae re ipsa patet cum mox in ipso capitis exordio lingua non²⁸ Latina sed Pelasga tituletur.

NOTES

1 'dolentis' found in the right margin

2 'ac' seems to be a mistaken addition by scribe.

3 Read 'fore'.

4 In the MS someone corrected 'areditatem' to read 'ariditatem'.

5 [Sed repente... meam ad] Gregorius I, *Moralia in Job*, praef., 1.1,2 (PL 75, 512B-C)

6 In the MS the word was originally written as 'exemplandam', but the 'em' has been erased to make 'explandam'. Quite possibly it should be 'explendam'.

7 [Et quamuis illius] Gregorius I, *Moralia in Job*, praef., 1.2 (PL 75, 512C)

8 The 'u' in 'hunc' is interlinear, and it appears to be a replacement of an 'i' that was erased. Hence, it seems to have been written originally as 'hinc'.

9 In the MS it appears to have been written originally as 'impletus', but the 'l' is erased.

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- 10 [quisquis ergo ... alueum recurrat] Gregorius I, Moralia in Job, praef., 1.2 (PL 75, 513B)
- 11 Read 'superficie'.
- 12 [Diuius etenim ... elephas natet] Gregorius I, Moralia in Job., praef, 1.4 (PL 75, 515A)
- 13 Read 'dignum'.
- 14 An 'in' must have been left out by the scribe in this place. There is something that looks like it in the right margin, but I am not sure.
- 15 [In quibus... doloribus anhelo] Gregorius I, Moralia in Job., praef, 1.4 (PL 75, 515A-B)
- 16 [ita igitur... solet infigi.] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, epigram. (PL 93, 134A-B)
- 17 'niuce' = 'unice'.
- 18 In the MS something has been erased between 'ruminatus' and 'ad'.
- 19 [Scriptura sacra mentis... longe distamus] Gregorius I, Moralia 2.1 (PL 75, 554B)
- 20 Read 'proprium'.
- 21 [Ibant inquit ... mentem pascent] Gregorius I, Moralia 1.32 (PL 75 547A-D)
- 22 The 'a' at the end of the 'sapientia' is interlinear. It appears to have been written originally as 'sapienti'.
- 23 Read 'leuitas'.
- 24 'exsequi', The 's' is interlinear in the MS.
- 25 Read 'nullum'.
- 26 [Dies enim... torpens uacat] Gregorius I, Moralia 1.32 (PL 75 547A-D)
- 27 [Intra in ... inlicita coercemus] Gregorius I, Moralia 4.26 (PL 75, 660D)
- 28 'non' is interlinear.

CHAPTER 1

(1:1) INTERROGATIO. Quid est quod dicit « Apocalypsis Ihesu Christi quam dedit illi Deus » cum Filius aequalis sit Patri? RESPONSIO. Fundata per apostolos Ecclesia quali uel cursu dilatanda uel fine percipienda¹ esset ad roborandos contra mundi aduersa fidei praedicatores oportuit reuelari. Cuius reuelationem mysterii Ioannes more suo Filii gloriam ad Patrem referens Ihesum Christum a Deo percepisse testatur.²

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INTERROGATIO. Quid est, inquit, « quae oportet fieri cito »? RESPONSIO. Id est quae in praesenti tempore sunt Ecclesiae³ uentura.⁴

INTERROGATIO. Quid est « et significauit » aut, sicut nonnulli codices habent, « signauit »? RESPONSIO. Mysticis eandem Apocalipsin dictis innexuit ne cunctis manifesta uilsceret.⁵

(1:3) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « Beatus qui legit et qui audiunt uerba prophetiae huius » et cetera? RESPONSIO. Ideo doctor et auditores beati sunt quia uerba Dei seruantibus tempus breui⁶ laboris gaudia secuntur aeterna.⁷ Quemadmodum ueritas mulieri dicenti⁸ beatum⁹ tanti filii¹⁰ matris uentrem una et ubera respondit, « Magis etiam beati qui audiunt uerbum Dei et custodiunt » [Lk. 11:27-28]. Nam procul [fol. 6r] dubio beatum licet singulari calculo appellet, quisquis bene intellegere accelerauerit¹¹, et intellegens operibus supplere, et demum, sicut in eodem libro pangit, « et qui audit dicat: Ueni » [Rev. 22:17], id est, quisquis internum in mente fidei uel claritatis¹² lumen percipit, ad hoc et alios conuocet; uel, sicut de eadem ueritate¹³ fertur, « quae coepit Ihesus facere et docere » [Acts 1:1].

(1:4) INTERROGATIO. Quid est quod dicit Iohannes septem ecclesias solum modo uale fecisse cum magister ueritatis dicat, « Ite in mundum uniuersum, praedicate omni creaturae » [Mk. 16:15]? RESPONSIO. Per has septem Ecclesias, omni Ecclesiae describit. Solet enim uniuersitas septenario numero designari, quod septem diebus cunctum hoc saeculi tempus euoluatur. SEQUITUR. Gratia uobis et pax ab eo qui est, et qui erat, et qui uenturus est, et a

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septem spiritibus. RESPONSIO. Gratiam deuotis optat et pacem a Deo Patre aeterno et a Spiritu septiformi et ab Ihesu Christo, qui in suscepto homine testimonium perhibuit Patri. Filium tertio loco nominat, de quo erat plura locuturus. Nominat et nouissime, quod ipse sit primus et nouissimus, quia iam nominauerat illum in Patre dicendo « qui uenturus est ». Primogenitus mortuorum et princeps regum terrae.¹⁴

(1:6) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « et fecit nos regnum et sacerdotes Deo et Patri suo »? RESPONSIO. Quia Rex regum et Sacerdos caelestis se offerendo pro nobis nos suo corpori adunauit, nemo sanctorum est qui spiritaliter [fol. 6v] sacerdotis officio careat, cum sit membrum summi aeternique Sacerdotis. (1:8) SEQUITUR. Ego sum Alfa et O, initium et finis, ait Dominus Deus. RESPONSIO. Initium quem nullus praecedit, finis cuius¹⁵ nullus succedit. Item eadem repetit: « qui est, et qui erat, et qui uenturus est. » RESPONSIO. Hoc idem dixerat de Patre. Deus enim Pater et uenit et uenturus est in Filio.¹⁶

(1:13) INTERROGATIO. Uestitum podere similem filio hominis se uidisse asserit. RESPONSIO. Poderis, quae Latinae¹⁷ tonica talaris dicitur, et est uestis sacerdotalis, Christi sacerdotium ostendit, quo se pro nobis in ara crucis obtulit hostiam Patri.¹⁸

(2:10) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « et habebitis tribulationem diebus decem »? RESPONSIO. Totum tempus significat in quo Decalogi sunt necessaria mandata. Quamdiu enim lucem uerbi diuini sequeris, carcerem necesse est aduersantis inimici patiaris.¹⁹

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(3:1) INTERROGATIO. Quid est quod angelo ecclesiae Sardis ait, « Scio opera tua, quia nomen habes quod uiuas, et mortuus es »? RESPONSIO. Tibi quidem uiuus esse²⁰ uideris, sed si non in prauorum correctione uigilaueris, iam inter mortuos computaberis,²¹ quia nihil rectoribus iuuat si ipsi bene uiuunt, si alios corrigere neglegunt; unde et Salomon: « Non dabis oculis tuis somnum, nec palpebras tuas²² dormitationem » [Prov. 6:4].

(3:2) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « non enim », inquit, « inuenio opera tua plena coram Deo meo »? RESPONSIO. Plena coram Deo non sunt [fol. 7r] opera rectoris si non et ceteros excitare contenderit, quamuis hominibus innoxius esse uideatur.²³

(3:15) INTERROGATIO. Quid est quod angelo Laoditiae dicit, « Scio opera tua, quia neque frigidus es neque calidus »? RESPONSIO. Nec in fide feruidus es, nec in totum infidelis. Quod si adhuc infidelis esses, iam tibi spes conuertendi maneret; nunc uero, quia uoluntatem Domini, quam cognouisti, non facis, de uisceribus Ecclesiae meae proiceris. (3:19) SEQUITUR. Ego quos amo arguo et castigo. RESPONSIO. Ne refugias pati aduersa, cum hoc speciale sit indicium amari a Domino.²⁴

(3:20) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « Ecce ego sto ad ostium et pulso »? RESPONSIO. Ostium quidem cordis tui exortationis dextera pulso, quam si libenter receperis, me inhabitatore et coherede dignus haberis^{25, 26}

(5:1) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « Et uidi in dextera sedentem²⁷ super thronum librum scriptum intus et foris »? RESPONSIO. Haec uisio mysteria nobis sanctae Scripturae

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per Incarnationem Domini patefacta demonstrat, cuius unitas concors Uetus Testamentum quasi exterius, et Nouum continet interius. SEQUITUR. Signatum sigillis septem. RESPONSIO. Id est uel omni latentium mysteriorum plenitudine tectum, uel Spiritus septiformis dispositione conscriptum. Cuncta enim series Ueterisque²⁸ Noui Testamenti paenitentiam pro peccatis agendam, regnum caeleste quaerendum, et fletus infernales praemonet²⁹ esse [fol. 7v] fugiendos.³⁰

(5:3) INTERROGATIO. Et nemo poterat in caelo, neque in terra, neque subtus terram aperire librum. RESPONSIO. Neque angelus neque ullus iustorum, etiam carnis uinculo absolutus, mysteria diuinae legis reuelare uel inuestigare potuerunt. Neque respicere illum, id est contemplari splendorem gratiae Noui Testamenti, sicut filii Israhel in faciem latoris Ueteris Testamenti Nouum continentis aspicere non poterant. (5:4) SEQUITUR. Et ego flebam multum. RESPONSIO. Id est communem humani generis miseriam agnoscens doluit. (5:5) SEQUITUR. Et unus de senioribus dicit mihi: Ne fleueris; ecce uicit leo de tribu Iuda. RESPONSIO. Flere prohibetur quia iam tunc impletum erat in Christi passione quod diu latebat mysterium.³¹

NOTES ON CHAPTERS 1:1-5:3

1 Read 'perficienda'.

2 [Fundata per... percepisse testatur] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.1 (PL 93,133C)

3 'Ecclesiae', The final 'e' is interlinear in the MS.

4 [Idest quae ... Ecclesiae uentura] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.1 (PL 93,133C)

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- 5 [Mysticis eamdem ... manifesta uilesceret] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.1 (PL 93,133C)
- 6 Read 'breue'.
- 7 [Ideo doctor... secuntur aeterna] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.1 (PL 93. 134C)
- 8 'dicenti' is in the left margin in the MS.
- 9 First written 'beati', then corrected to 'beatum' interlinearly.
- 10 'filii' is an interlinear in the MS.
- 11 'accelerauerit': the 'it' is an interlinear in the MS.
- 12 Possibly a mistranscription for 'c(h)aritatis'?
- 13 'ueritate' is an interlinear in the MS.
- 14 [Per has... regum terrae] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.1 (PL 93. 134C)
- 15 There seems to be a half-erased 's' at the end of this word. Read 'cui'.
- 16 [Quia Rex... in Filio succedit] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.1 (PL 93,135A-B)
- 17 Read 'Latine'.
- 18 [Poderis quae... hostiam Patri] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.1 (PL 93,136A)
- 19 [Totum tempus... inimici patiaris] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.2 (PL 93, 138B)
- 20 'esse' is an interlinear in the MS.
- 21 [Tibi quidem... mortuos computaberis] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.3 (PL 93, 140C)
- 22 'tuas' The scribe wrote it twice and marked a line through the duplicate. Read 'palpebris tuis'.
- 23 [Plena coram... esse uideatur] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.3 (PL 93, 140D)
- 24 [Nec in... a Domino] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.3 (PL 93, 142A-B)
- 25 Read 'habebere'.
- 26 [Ostium quidem... dignus habebere] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.3 (PL 93, 142C)
- 27 Read 'sedentis'.
- 28 '-que' is obviously misplaced. Read either 'Ueteris Nouique Testamenti' or 'Noui Ueterisque Testamenti'.
- 29 'praemonet' first written 'praeminet', and the 'i' was corrected to 'o' interlinearly.
- 30 [Haec uisio... esse fugiendos] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.5 (PL 93, 145A-B)
- 31 [Neque angelus... latebat mysterium] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.5 (PL 93, 145C-D)

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(6:1) INTERROGATIO. Et uidi quod aperuisset Agnus unum de sigillis. RESPONSIO. Cum signa primo soluantur, dein liber aperiatur, certa ratione praeposterauit usitatum ordinem. Dominus enim patiens ac resurgens finem se esse legis edocuit. Ascendens autem in caelum Spiritu sancto misso secretioris archani munere firmavit Ecclesiam. Tunc ergo librum aperuit, et nunc eius signacula soluit. In primo igitur sigillo, decus Ecclesiae primitivae; in sequentibus tribus, triformae¹ contra eam bellum; in quinto, gloriam sub hoc bello triumphatorum; in sexto, illa quae tempore uentura sunt Antichristi; et, paululum superioribus recapitulatis, in septimo, cernit [fol. 8r] initium quietis aeternae.²

(6:6) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « Bilibris tritici denario, et tres bilibres hordei denario, et uinum et oleum ne laeseris »? RESPONSIO. Caue, inquit, ne exemplo pessimo³ fratrem tuum scandalizes, propter quem Christus mortuus est, et sacri sanguinis crismatisque portat insignia; quia siue perfecti meritis, siue etiam minimi quique in Ecclesia, fide tamen sanctae Trinitatis imbuti, omnes eodem perfecto pretio sanguinis Dominici sunt redempti. Nec inmerito bilibri et non simplici libra fidei uel operis perfectio exprimitur, quae utraque in radice geminae consistit caritatis.⁴

(6:9) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « Uidi subtus altare animas interfectorum propter uerbum Dei »? RESPONSIO. Qui Ecclesiam dixerat in praesenti multipliciter afflictam dicat⁵ et gloriam animarum post corporum poenam. Uidi, inquit, eas sub altare, id est, in secretario laudis aeternae. Ara enim aurea et interius posita et prope Dominici corporis arcam non ut exterior carnem et sanguinem, sed

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sola offert Domino tymiamata laudis; et qui nunc exhibent corpora sua hostiam uiuentem [Rom. 12:1], tunc, disruptis carnis uinculis, illi sacrificant hostiam laudis [cf. Ps. 115:16-17]. Potest autem et hyperbaton esse, ut non sub ara uiderit, sed sub ara occisos, id est sub testificatione nominis Christi, sicut de Machabeis dictum est « **[fol. 8v]** Sub testamento Dei ceciderunt⁶ » [2 Macc. 7:36 acc. to LXX].⁷ Nunc, otena kme⁸, in campo in aurem cor ta trans dis artius nectere.⁹

(7:4) INTERROGATIO. Quid est « Et audiui numerum signatorum, cxliiii milia signati, ex omni tribu filiorum Israhel »? RESPONSIO. De numero finito innumerabilis significatur totius Ecclesiae multitudo, quae de patriarchis, uel prosapia carnis uel fidei, est imitatione progenita. « Si enim », inquit, « uos Christi, ergo Abrahae semen estis » [Gal. 3:29]. Ad augmentum autem perfectionis pertinet et ipse¹⁰ duodecim duodecies multiplicari, et ad summam millenario perfici, qui est denarius numerus quadratus solidus significans stabilem Ecclesiae uitam. Propterea quippe duodenario numero saepius Ecclesia figuratur quia per orbem quadratum in fide consistit sanctae Trinitatis. Ter enim quaterni decus dipondius faciunt¹¹. Denique et apostoli eandem mundo fidem praedicaturi duodecim sunt electi, numero mysterium operis sui figurantes. Ex tribu nimirum Iuda duodecim scilicet milia signati. Conuenienter et a Iuda inchoat, ex qua tribu ortus est Dominus noster, et Dan praetermisit, ex quo dicitur Antichristus esse nascendus, sicut scriptum est, « Fiat Dan coluber in uia, cerastes in semita, mordens ungulas equi ut cadat ascensor eius » [Gen. 49:17]. Quia non ordinem terrenae generationis, sed iuxta **[fol. 9r]** interpretaationem nominum

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uirtutes Ecclesiae decreuit exponere, quae confessione et laude praesenti ad dexteram uitae festinat aeternae. Hoc enim nomen Iuda, qui primus, et Benjamin, qui ultimus ponitur, sonant. Primus ergo Iudas, qui confessio siue laudatio interpretaetur, ponitur, quia ante initium confessionis culmen bonorum nullus adpraehendit, et nisi per confessionem renuntiemus actibus malis, non informamur rectis. Secundus Ruben, qui interpretaetur uidens filium. In filiis opera designari Psalmista testatur, qui in beati uiri benedictionibus dicit, « Filii tui sicut nouella oliuarum » [Ps. 127:3], itemque, « et uidens¹² filios filiorum tuorum » [Ps. 127:6]. Non enim qui timet Dominum nisi genuerit filios nepotesque susceperit beatus esse non potest, cum uirgines fideles potior merces expectat¹³, sed in filiis opera, in filiis uero filiorum fructus operum, id est mercedem designat aeternam. Post Iudam ergo Ruben, id est post exordia diuinae confessionis et laudis, perfectio sequitur actionis. Sed quia per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum Dei [Acts. 14:21], post Ruben sequitur Gad, qui temptatio uel accinctus interpretaetur. Post inchoationem enim boni operis maioribus necesse est hominem temptationibus probari, atque ad bella grauiora succingi, ut fidei illius fortitudo conprobetur, dicente Salomone, « Fili, accedens ad seruitutem Dei, sta in iustitia [fol. 9v] et timore, praepara animam tuam ad temptationem » [Sir. 2:1]. Et quoniam beatificamus eos qui sustinuerunt sufferentiam, ideo post Gad Aser, id est beatus, ponitur, congruo satis ordine. Beatus enim uir qui suffert temptationem, quoniam cum probatus¹⁴ fuerit accipiet coronam uitae [Jm. 1:12]. Quia uero huius beatitudinis fida promissione securi non angustantur, sed spe gaudentes in tribulatione patientes cum

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Psalmographo concinnunt, « Uiam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatares cor meum » [Ps. 118:32], et cum matre beati Samuhelis exultantes aiunt, « Dilatum est os meum super inimicos meos, quia laetata sum in salutari tuo » [I Sam. 2:1], propterea Neptalim succedit, quod est latitudo. Sed et ipsum Manases sequitur, qui interpretaetur oblitus uel necessitas. Cuius nominis mysterio monemur ut temptationum praesentium angoribus edocti ea quae retro sunt obliuiscens sic in ea quae ante sunt secundum Apostolum extendamur [Phil. 3:13] ut carnis curam non in desideriis [Rom. 13:14], sed sola necessitate humanae conditionis adstricti faciamus, de qua Psalmista meliora suspirans orabat, « De necessitatibus meis eripe me » [Ps. 24:17]. Huic supponitur Symeon, id est audiuit tristitiam uel nomen habitaculi, ut etiam huius qualitate uocabuli euidentius inculcaret et quid hic habendum et quid sit salubriter expectandum. Illis enim habitaculi caelestis gaudium dabitur [fol. 10r] quorum hic animus fructuosa penitentia contristatur. Quibus et dicitur, « Tristitia uestra uertetur in gaudium » [John 16:20]. Proinde Leui subnectitur, id est additus. In quo intellegimus siue eos qui temporalibus mercantur aeterna, sicut Salomon ait, « Redemptio animae uiri propriae diuitiae » [Prov. 13:8], siue illos qui Dei sequendo consilium percipiunt in hoc saeculo centuplicia cum tribulationibus, in futuro autem saeculo uitam aeternam [Mk. 10:30]¹⁵. His et quod scriptum est conuenit: « Qui addit scientiam addit laborem » [Eccles. 1:18]. Nam et sancto Iob ad hoc tribulationum aceruitas addebatur ut probato proemiorum merces amplior redderetur. Unde non inmerito Isachar ei ordine recto succedit, qui interpretatus est merces, quia, sicut docet apostolus, non sunt condignae passionis huius temporis ad

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futuram gloriam quae reuelabitur in nobis [Rom. 8:18]. Fructuosius quippe pugnatur ubi merces certa speratur. Haec autem in habitaculo fortitudinis Deus operatur et perficit, quod dicitur Zabulon, quando uirtus in¹⁶ infirmitate perficitur [2 Cor. 12:9], ut corpus quod ab inimicis putatur infirmum, et per cuius materiam animo quoque inferre nituntur interitum, Deo confortante experiatur inuictum, augmento succedente felici, quod uocabulum Ioseph indicat, gratiarum uidelicet addenda dona designans, siue de talentorum dupla redhibitione usuras commodi spirituales¹⁷ [fol. 10v] intellegas, siue in his quae uotiuia fidelium religioni¹⁸ Redemptori Deo redduntur accipias. Atque ut hos omnes quos et ordo et interpretaatio nominum his¹⁹ significatiuae²⁰ positos ²¹ in futuro iudicio ad dexteram regis Christi aeterni futuros intellegas, Benjamin, ut praediximus, postremo loco supponitur, id est filius dexterae, tamquam ipse sit finis ordinis, cum nouissima inimica morte destructa [I Cor. 15:26], felicitas hereditatis aeterna donabitur electis, siue unusquisque fidelium filius dexterae iure dicatur, siue omnis Ecclesiae coetus, de qua canimus, « Adstetit regina ad dextris tuis in uestitu deaurato circumamicta uarietate » [Ps. 44:10]. Ex singulis ergo tribubus duodecim sunt milia signati quia, in quibuscumque singuli fidelium uirtutibus proficerint, antiquorum necesse est patrum semper fide roborentur atque informantur exemplis. Duodenario enim numero, propter apostolorum uel patriarcharum summam, saepe doctorum, saepe totius Ecclesiae formam designari certissimum est. Siue enim confessione quique tamquam in Iuda laudabiles; siue in Ruben operum prole praeclari; siue in Gad temptationum exercitio fortes; siue in Aser certaminum uictoria felices; siue in Nephtalim largis misericordiae operibus dilatati;

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siue in Manase posteriorum obliti; siue in Simeon quas²² tristes adhuc in conualle lacrimarum, [fol. 11r] semper autem gaudentes nomine habitaculi in caelestem suspirantes Hierusalem; siue in Leui qui promissionibus uitae praesentis et futurae congaudeant, additis bonis temporalibus aeterno bono fundati; siue in Isachar futurae mercedis contemplatione firmati; siue in Zabulon qui pro Christo suas animas ponant; siue in Ioseph qui et augmento spiritalis substantiae studeant et super Dei praecepta aliquid amplius uel in uirginitate uel ex facultatum suarum offerant quantitate; siue in Benjamin qui felicitatis aeternae dexteram indefessis uotis exspectent, in sua quemque professione congruit patrum praecedentium regula quasi duodenario numero signari, atque ex singularium meritis personarum perfectissimam Ecclesiae pulchritudinem quasi centum quadraginta quattuor milium summam colligi.¹

(8:5) INTERROGATIO. Quid est quod post pauca in secundo libro sonat, « Et facta sunt tonitrua, et uoces, et fulgora, et terremotus »? RESPONSIO. Tonitrua² comminationis supernae et uoce exortationis et fulgore miraculorum exemplisque sanctorum terram mouit.³

(10:8) INTERROGATIO. Quid est quod in secundo libro ait, « Et uox quam audiui de caelo loquentem mecum: Uade et accipe librum apertum de manu angeli »? RESPONSIO. Domino futuri temporis mysteria pandente et dicente, « Adpropinquabit regnum caelorum » [Mt. 3:2, 4:17, 10:7]. Et abii⁴ ad [fol. 11v] angelum dicens ei ut daret mihi librum. Accedat ad Dominum qui uelit docendi percipere sacramenta. Et dixit mihi, Accipe librum, et deuora illum. Id est insere tuis uisceribus, et describe⁵ in latitudine cordis tui.⁶

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(10:9) INTERROGATIO. Et faciet, inquit, amaricare⁷ uentrem tuum, sed in ore tuo erit dulcis tamquam mel. RESPONSIO. Cum perceperis et⁸ oblectaberis diuini Eloquii⁹ dulcedine, sed amaritudinem senties cum praedicare et operare coeperis quod intellexeris. Nam quid liber comestus et amaritudine mixta dulcedo significaret exprimit dicendo, « Oportet te¹⁰ praedicare gentibus et populis » [Rev. 10:11], quod uidelicet ereptus exilio gentibus esset Euangelium praedicaturus, amore quidem dulce, sed tolerandis persecutionibus amarum.¹¹

(14:1) INTERROGATIO. Et uidi, et ecce agnus stabat super montem Sion. RESPONSIO. Id est Dominus Christus Ecclesiae suae certaminum fasce desudante¹² exemplo uirtutis et protectionis munimine praestabit.¹³ SEQUITUR. Et cum illo cxliiii milia. RESPONSIO. Numerus hic finitus pro infinito debet intellegi, et secreti significatione mysterii uirginali aptus examini, quod Deum ex toto corde, tota anima, totaque mente diligens [Mt. 22:37], corporis quoque, quod ex quattuor qualitatibus subsistit, illi est¹⁴ integritate sacratum¹⁵. Ter enim terni nonus, et quater quaterni decus sexis, sedecies autem noueni cxliiii adimplent, ut, cum de his qui in artioris uitae gradu constituti merito in Sion [fol. 12r] montem cum Agno uidentur tam perfecta multitudo cernatur, de ceteris Ecclesiae membris non dubitetur. SEQUITUR. habentia nomen eius et nomen Patris scriptum in frontibus suis. RESPONSIO. Ostendit quae sit imitatio notae in fronte corporis bestiae, dum Deum et Christum dicit scriptum in frontibus Ecclesiae. Sion quem dicit non aliud esse monstrat quam Ecclesiam, quae ad deuincenda grauamina praessurarum sublimi contemplationis erecta gaudio Regis

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sui certamina laude simul et imitatione concelebrat. Hoc est enim ueraciter Agno stanti psallere.²³

NOTES ON CHAPTERS 6:1-14:1

- 1 Read 'triforme'.
- 2 [Cum signa... quietis aeternae] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.6 (PL 93, 146C-D)
- 3 'pessimo' is in the right margin of the MS.
- 4 [Caue inquit... consistit charitatis] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.6 (PL 93, 147B-C)
- 5 Read 'dicit'.
- 6 2 Macc. 7:36, Vulg., "sub testamento aeternae vitae effecti sunt."
- 7 [Qui Ecclesiam... Dei ceciderunt] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.6 (PL 93 147D-148A)
- 8 'o nate karissime'
- 9 This sentence seems too corrupt to be made sense of. 'trans' is interlinear.
- 10 Read 'ipsa'.
- 11 'faciunt' is a mistaken addition.
- 12 Read 'uideas'.
- 13 Read 'expectet'.
- 14 The 'pro' of 'probatus' is interlinear. Maybe the scribe first wrote 'beatus'.
- 15 Vulgate, 'cum persecutionibus, et in saeculo futuro vitam aeternam'.
- 16 'in' is an interlinear in the MS.
- 17 Read 'spiritalis'.
- 18 Read 'religione'.
- 19 Read 'hic'.
- 20 Read 'significatiue'.
- 21 The scribe left out a verb 'indicat'.
- 22 Read 'quasi'.
- 23 [Hoc numero... summam colligi] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.7 (PL 93 150B-152C)

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(14:2) INTERROGATIO. Et uox quam audiui sicut citharidorum citharizantium in citharis suis. RESPONSIO. Cum citharistae Dei omnes sancti sint, qui carnem suam crucifigentes cum uitiiis et concupiscentiis [Gal. 5:24] laudant eum in psalterio et cithara [Ps. 150:3], quanto amplius illi qui euangelicae priuilegio castitatis totos se Domino faciunt holocaustum, singulariter abnegant semetipsos, et tollentes crucem suam [Mt. 16:24, Lk. 9:23] sequentur Agnum quocumque ierit [Rev.14:4]? (14:3) SEQUITUR. Et cantabant quasi canticum nouum ante sedem. RESPONSIO. Uetus erat canticum, « Beatus qui habet semen in Sion et domesticos in Hierusalem » [Is. 31:9 acc. to LXX]; nouum uero est, « Laetare sterilis quae non parit » [Gal. 4:27, Is. 54:1 (the latter acc. to LXX)], itemque, « Dabo », inquit, « eunuchis, dicit Dominus, in domo mea et in muris meis locum et nomen melius a filiis et filiabus » [Is. 56:5].²

[fol. 12v] INTERROGATIO. Et nemo poterat dicere canticum, nisi illa cxliiii milia, qui empti sunt de terra. RESPONSIO. Singulariter canticum cum Agno cantare est cum eo in perpetuum prae cunctis fidelibus etiam de carnis incorruptione gaudere. Quod tamen electi ceteri canticum audire possunt, licet dicere nequeant, qui per caritatem quidem in illorum celsitudine laeti sunt, quamuis ad eorum proemia non³ adsurgant⁴. (14:4) SEQUITUR. Hi empti sunt ex hominibus primitiae Deo et Agno. RESPONSIO. De illo sancto et immaculato Ecclesiae grege quasi sanctiores purioresque hostiae pro uoluntatis suae meritis a Spiritu sancto eliguntur, quos Apostolus praeceptum de eis Domini non habens [1 Cor. 7:25] obsecrat ut exhibeant⁵ corpora sua hostiam uiuam, sanctam, Deo placentem [Rom. 12:1].

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(14:5) INTERROGATIO. Et in ore ipsorum non est inuentum mendacium. RESPONSIO. Non solius pudicitiae merito diuino comitatu uirgines copulantur, nisi et ab omni contagione peccati immaculatam gesserint uitam.⁶ Quaerendum est quod ait ut in ipsorum ore non sit inuentum mendacium, cum alias Spiritus Sanctus confirmet, « Omnis homo mendax » [Ps. 115 :11], et apostolus ad⁷ ipsum ad Romanos contra arrogantiam Iudaeorum redarguendam, « Omnis, inquam, homo mendax, Deus autem uerax, ut iustificeris in sermonibus tuis, et uincas cum iudicaris » [Rom.3:4]. Augustinus nec aliorum uitam tuendam mendacii nostri esse asserit. Idem tamen subtilissime septem genera [fol. 13r] mendaciorum luculento patefecit sermone. Nam sicut non omne sed quoddam intellegimus ubi ait, « Si non uenissem et locutus fuisset peccatum non haberent » [John 15:22], ergo aliquando aliud ore quam se res habeat proferimus, et tamen mente ita hoc ipsum fixe credimus, non mendacio, sed immo errori deputandum est; in ore ipsorum, Christum uidelicet praedicantium testificantiumque, non est inuentum mendacium. Est peccatum mendacii mortem gignens, ut est illud: « Perdes omnes qui locuntur mendacium » [Ps. 5:7]; et est mendacium non uitium sed criminis mortem carens, sicut in plerisque sanctarum Scripturarum Noui Ueterisque Testamenti paginis lectoris intentio repperiri⁸ ualet.⁹ Hanc uisionem Thiconius non de uirginibus specialiter, sed de tota generaliter interpretaetur Ecclesia, quam dispondit apostolus uni uiro uirginem castam exhibere Christo [2 Cor. 11:2], ita concludens: Non dixit, « Non fuit in ore eorum mendacium », sed « Non est inuentum », sicut apostolus dicit, « Et haec quidem fuistis, sed abluti estis » [1 Cor. 6:11], et « Iniquitas iniusti non nocebit ei, qua die

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conuersus fuerit ab iniquitate sua » [Ezek. 33:12], et poterit esse uirgo, et dolus in ore eius non inueniri [1 Pet. 2:22]. Uirgines enim castos dicit et pudicos.¹⁰ SEQUITUR. Et cecidi ad pedes eius, et dixit: Uide ne feceris: conseruus tuus sum et fratrum tuorum. RESPONSIO. Supra dixerat, « Ego sum primus [fol. 13v] et nouissimus » [Rev. 1:17]. Ostendit ergo angelum missum esse in figuram Domini Ecclesiae. Nam in fine dicit, « Ego sum Ihesus, misi angelum meum testificari haec in ecclesiis » [Rev. 22:16]. Habentium testimonium Ihesu. Postquam Dominus Ihesus hominem assumptum super caelos eleuauit, angelus ab homine timuit adorari, super se uidelicet adorans hominem Deum. Quod ante Incarnationem Domini ab hominibus factum, et nequaquam ab angelis prohibitum esse legimus. Testimonium Ihesu est spiritus prophetiae. Quicquid enim spiritus prophetiae dixit testimonium Ihesu est, qui habet testimonium a lege et prophetis. « Ne me ergo », inquit, « pro Deo adores, cum illius ego uirtutibus testimonium perhibere uenerim ».¹¹ Denique angelus qui Moysi apparuisse describitur modo angelus, modo Dominus memoratur. Angelus uidelicet propter hoc quod exterius loquendo seruebat, Dominus autem dicitur quia interius praesidens loquendi efficaciam ministrabat. Cum ergo loquens ab interiori regitur, et per obsequentium¹² angelus et per inspirationem Dominus nominatur. Hinc Dauid dicit, « Attendite, populus meus, legem meam; inclinate aurem uestram in uerba oris mei » [Ps. 77:1]. Non enim lex Dauid aut populus Dauid, sed personam eius ex quo loquebatur adsumens, ipsius auctoritate loquitur, cuius inspiratione replebatur. Hoc cotidie fieri in Ecclesia cernimus, si uigilanter intuemur.

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[fol. 14r] Nam stans in medio populi lector clamat, « Ego sum Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, Deus Iacob » [Ex. 3:6], et, quod ipse Deus sit, vere profecto non dicit; nec tamen per hoc quod dicit ueritatis regulam deserit, quia cui ministerium lectioni¹³ exhibet, eius dominium uoce praetendit. Itaque scriptores sacri Eloqui, quia repleti Spiritu Sancto super se trahuntur, quasi extra semetipsos fiunt, et sic de se sententias¹⁴ quasi de aliis proferunt.¹⁵

(20:1) INTERROGATIO. Et uidi angelum descendentem de caelo habentem clauem abyssi et catenam magnam in manu sua. RESPONSIO. Dominus ergo paterna praeditus potestate descendit in carne cum principe mundi bella gesturus atque illo ligato uasa eius recepturus. (20:2) SEQUITUR. Et adpraehendit draconem, serpentem antiquum, qui est Diabolus et Satan. RESPONSIO. Diabolus deorsum fluens interpretaetur. Grece autem criminator dicitur. Satan aduersarius siue praeuaricator. Draco ergo propter nocendi malitiam, serpens propter fallendi astutiam, Diabolus propter status sui casum, Satan propter obstinationem Domino aduersandi nominatur. (20:4) SEQUITUR. Et animae decollatorum propter testimonium Ihesu et propter uerbum Dei. RESPONSIO. Subauditur quod post haec dicturus erat: regnauerunt cum Christo mille annis. Regnat itaque Ecclesia cum Christo in uiuis [fol. 14v] et mortuis. Propterea enim, sicut apostolus dicit, mortuus est Christus, ut uiuorum et mortuorum dominetur [Rom. 14:9]. Sed ideo martyrum tantum animas commemorauit quia ipsi praecipue regnant post mortem qui usque ad mortem pro ueritate certauerunt¹⁶, quia non

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inchoantibus promittitur, sed perseuerantibus beatitas aeterna.

(20:2/3) INTERROGATIO. Post religionem mille annorum oportet eum solui modico tempore. RESPONSIO. Tunc soluetur, ut sanctus Augustinus ait¹⁷, quando et breue tempus erit. Nam tribus semis annis legitur totis suis suorumque uiribus saeuiturus. Et tales erunt cum quibus belligerandum est, ut uinci tanto eius impetu insidiisque non possint. Si autem numquam solueretur, minus appareret eius maligna potentia, minus sanctae ciuitatis fidelissima patientia probaretur, minus denique prospiceretur quam magno malo eius tam bene usus fuerit omnipotens Deus¹⁸; quia quantum potentior fuerit eius malignitas, tantum Dei potentia potior gratiorque apparebit.

(20:6) INTERROGATIO. Beatus et sanctus qui habet partem in resurrectionem primam. RESPONSIO. Id est qui seruauerit quod renatus est. SEQUITUR. Sed erunt sancti Dei et Christi. RESPONSIO. Alia editio habet « sacerdotes Dei et Christi ». Non autem de solis episcopis et praesbiteris dictum est, qui propriae¹⁹ uocantur in Ecclesia sacerdotes, sed²⁰ sicut omnes christi dicimur propter mysticum chrisma, sic omnes sacerdotes quoniam membra sumus unius sacerdotis; unde Petrus dicit, « Gens sancta, regale [fol. 15r] sacerdotium » [1 Pet. 2:9].

INTERROGATIO. Et regnabunt cum Christo mille annis. RESPONSIO. Retulit Spiritus, cum haec scriberet, regnaturam Ecclesiam mille annos, id est usque ad finem mundi. (20:7) SEQUITUR. Et cum consummati fuerint mille anni, soluetur Satanas de carcere suo. RESPONSIO. Consummatos dixit a toto partem. Nam sic soluetur ut

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supersint anni tres et menses sex nouissimi certaminis, sed praeter hunc tropum recte dicitur finitum tempus.²¹ Quod superius conclusit tres semis, hic annos tres et menses sex memorauit.

NOTES ON CHAPTERS 14:2-20:7

- 1 [Numerus hic... stanti psallere] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, (PL 93 2.14.173A-B)
- 2 [Cum citharistae... et filiabus] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, (PL 93 2.14.173C)
- 3 'non' is interlinear.
- 4 'adsurgant', the 'n' is interlinear.
- 5 'exhibeant', the 'n' is interlinear.
- 6 [Singulariter canticum... gesserint uitam] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, (PL 93 2.14.173D-174B)
- 7 Read 'id'.
- 8 Read 'reperire'.
- 9 [Quaerendum est... repperiri ualet] From Alcuin.
- 10 [Hanc uisionem... et pudicos] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.14 (PL 93, 174B-C)
- 11 [Supra dixerat...perhibere uenerim] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.19 (PL 93, 188D-189A)
- 12 Read 'obsequentiam'.
- 13 Read either 'lectione' or 'lectionis'.
- 14 'sententias': 'ten' is interlinear.
- 15 [Denique angelus... aliis proferunt] Gregorius I, Moralia, Praefat.2 (PL 75)
- 16 [Dominus ergo ...ueritate certauerunt] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.20 (PL 93, 191B-192A)
- 17 De Civitate Dei 20.8.18.18
- 18 [Tunc soluetur...omnipotens Deus] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.20 (PL 93, 191D)
- 19 Read 'proprie'.
- 20 'sed' is interlinear.
- 21 [Retulit Spiritus...finitum tempus] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.20 (PL 93, 192C-D)

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(20:11/12) INTERROGATIO. Et uidi¹ thronum magnum et sedentem super eum, et coram eo libri aperti sunt, et alius liber apertus est, qui est uitae. RESPONSIO. Alia editio habet « qui est uitae uniuscuiusque ». Libros ergo apertos Testamenta dicit. Secundum enim utrumque Testamentum iudicabitur mundus². Librum uitae uniuscuiusque memoriam dicit gestorum nostrorum, non quod librum habeat commemoratorium occultorum cognitorum³. SEQUITUR. Et iudicati sunt mortui ex his quae scripta sunt in libris secundum opera ipsorum. RESPONSIO. Id est ex Testamentis iudicati sunt secundum quod ex eis fecerunt aut non fecerunt. Possunt etiam libri facta iustorum intellegi, quorum dum ex conparatione reprobi damnantur, quasi in expositione librorum legunt bonum quod agere ipsi [fol. 15v] noluerunt.⁴

(20:14/15) INTERROGATIO. Et mors et infernus missi sunt in stagnum ignis, et qui non est inuentus in libro uitae scriptus. RESPONSIO. Id est qui non est iudicatus a Deo uiuus. Unde mihi rectius dicere uidentur qui supra libros apertos conscientias singulorum et opera patefacta interpretauntur, librum autem uitae, praescientiam⁵ Dei, quae falli non potest de illis quibus aeterna dabitur uita, in quo sunt scripti, id est ante praecogniti.⁶

(21:1) INTERROGATIO. Et uidi caelum nouum et terram nouam. Primum enim caelum et prima terra abiit. RESPONSIO. Iudicatis uidelicet impiis, tunc figura huius mundi supernorum ignium conflagratione praeteribit, ut caelo et terra in melius commutatis incorruptioni et immortalitatum⁷ sanctorum corporum congrua utriusque commutationis qualitati⁸ conueniat.⁹

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(21:6) INTERROGATIO. Ego sitiendi dabo de fonte aquae uitae gratis. RESPONSIO. De hoc fonte inrorat nunc credentes in uia quem uincentibus ubertim hauriendum¹⁰ praebet in patria; utrumque autem gratis, gratia autem Dei uita aeterna in Christo Ihesu Domino nostro [Rom. 6:23].

(21:8) SEQUITUR. Timidis autem et incredulis et exsecratis et cetera. RESPONSIO. Blandis semper ad cautelam insinuandam austera permiscet; sicut Psalmista ait, « Custodit Dominus omnes diligentes se, et omnes peccatores disperdet » [Ps. 144:20]. Timidos autem **[fol. 16r]** coniungit incredulis quia ille timet experiri periculum certaminis qui dubitat de praemio uincentis. SEQUITUR. Et omnibus mendacibus pars erit in stagno ardente. RESPONSIO. Ostendit multa esse genera mendacii, sed periculosissimum et maxime detestandum est quo in religionem peccatur. De quo supra, « Dicunt », inquit, « se Iudaeos esse, et non sunt, sed mentientur¹¹, sunt enim synagoga Satanae » [Rev. 2:9]. (21:9) SEQUITUR. Ueni, ostendam tibi sponsam, uxorem agni. RESPONSIO. Sponsam et uxorem dicit Ecclesiam, quae immaculata permanens spiritales semper Deo filios generat, uel quod nunc Deo desponsata tunc ad immortales est perducenda nuptias.¹²

(21:10) INTERROGATIO. Et sustulit me in spiritu in montem magnum, et ostendit mihi ciuitatem sanctam Hierusalem. RESPONSIO. Post ruinam Babillonis, ciuitas sancta, quae sponsa est agni, supra montem posita uidetur; lapis enim praecisus de monte sine manibus comminuit simulacrum gloriae mundanae, et creuit in montem magnum, orbemque impleuit uniuersum [Dan. 2:34-35]. (21:10/11) SEQUITUR. Descendentem de caelo a Deo,

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habentem claritatem Dei. RESPONSIO. Tunc enim amplius decora¹³ uidebitur quando per Spiritum quo eius sponsus creditur conceptus et genitus imaginem plenae¹⁴ meruerit portare caelestem.¹⁵

(21:12) INTERROGATIO. Et habebat murum magnum et altum. RESPONSIO. Id est inexpugnabilem fidei, caritatis, speique firmitatem. Potest et ipse Dominus¹⁶ Ecclesiam undique protegens murus [fol. 16v] magnus intellegi, de quo Isaias ait, « Ponetur in ea murus et antemurale » [Is. 26:1], id est Domini protectio et intercessio sanctorum, qui iter faciunt ei docendo ad corda credentium. SEQUITUR. Habens portas duodecim. RESPONSIO. Hae portae apostoli sunt, qui suo uel scripto uel opere cunctis primordialiter gentibus ecclesiae pandebant introitum.¹⁷ INTERROGATIO. Et in portis angelos duodecim. Doctores scilicet apostolorum uestigia fidei et uerba mysterii sequentes. SEQUITUR. Et nomina scripta, quae sunt nomina duodecim filiorum Israhel. RESPONSIO. Memoria¹⁸ ueterum patrum significat praedicatorum cordibus insitam.¹⁹

(21:14) INTERROGATIO. Et murus ciuitatis habens fundamenta xii. RESPONSIO. Possunt autem et patriarchae fundamentorum uocabulo designari, qui nomina in se apostolorum, id est figuram, tenuerunt. Et notandum fundamenta cum pluraliter dicantur doctores uel uirtutes Ecclesiae, cum uero singulariter, ipsum significari Dominum, qui est fundamentum fundamentorum.²⁰

(21:15) INTERROGATIO. Et qui loquebatur mecum habebat mensuram harundineam auream. RESPONSIO. Christus, qui est sapientia Patris, sanctam metitur ciuitatem,

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quia omnia in numero et mensura et pondere [Wis. 11:21] constituens unicuique fidelium spiritalium distribuit dona gratiarum. Possunt et Ecclesiae **[fol. 17r]** doctores corpore fragiles, mente caelestes intellegi, qui merita solerter examinant singulorum. (21:16) SEQUITUR. Et ciuitas in quadro posita est. RESPONSIO. Idcirco ciuitas inposita quadro, et ex omni parte aequali dicitur dimensione locata, quia nulla sinitur inaequalitate notari. Perfecte²¹ enim, secundum apostolum, esse, idem sapere, pacem habere [2 Cor. 13:11], uere est in soliditate quadra subsistere.²²

INTERROGATIO. Et mensus est ciuitatem per stadia duodecim. RESPONSIO. Id est Ecclesiam fide operibusque conspexit uel donauit esse perfectam. Quattuor enim principalium perfectio uirtutum fide sanctae Trinitatis sublimata quasi numero duodenario dignitatem conponit Ecclesiae. SEQUITUR. Longitudo et latitudo et altitudo eius aequalia sunt. RESPONSIO. Haec est illa soliditas ueritatis inuictae qua Ecclesia longitudine fidei, latitudine caritatis, altitudine spei subnixa circumferri non sinitur omni uento doctrinae [Eph. 4:14], quarum si una minus habuerit, perfecta Ecclesiae stabilitas non erit. Diuersa enim in statu Ecclesiae describitur uirtutum dona diuidens singulis prout uult [1 Cor. 12:11], et unicuique datur Spiritus ad utilitatem [Ibid. 7], quia difficile est singulos cunctis florere uirtutibus.²³ Actenus gradatim in superioribus tuae parens²⁴ humillimae, te ona ceni²⁵, petitioni, quantum habenae permisere cucurrisse sufficiat.

[fol. 17v] Sed quia superius duodecim patrum duodecim milia signatorum certatim mysticae²⁶ utcumque excerptissimus, nunc superest, quod et id ipsum nosse te uelle haud dubium est, quatenus de numero seu uirtutes lapidum

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praetiosorum, quos²⁷ etiam in plerisque sanctarum Scripturarum locis leguntur, in ipso uidelicet duodenario consistentes numero, usquequaque non²⁸ taceamus, sed quorsum possumus percurramus, et ut sitis mentis tuae ardor et petitio supplex nosterque finem capiat labor. Nam in praefata ornamentis ciuitate et portae et dimensio, ad supplementum etiam ornamenta lapidum texuntur.

(21:19/20) INTERROGATIO. Fundamentum primum ciuitatis Dei, scilicet sanctae Ecclesiae, iaspis²⁹. RESPONSIO³⁰. Iaspidium multa sunt genera. Alius enim uiridi³¹ coloris et tinctus quasi floribus apparet; alius niui et spumae marinorum fluctuum, quasi mixto cruori obrutilans³². Per iaspidem ergo fidei uiror inmarcibilis indicatur, quae Dominicae Passionis sacramento per undam baptismatis inbuitur atque ad omne³³ spiritalium gratiarum flores proficientibus meritis instruitur, potestque cum sponsa dicere, « Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus » [Song 5:10]. Unde merito ex hoc lapide et hic structura muri et apud Isaiam [Is. 54:12] propugnacula eiusdem ciuitatis muniuntur pariter et ornantur. Secundus saphirus. Huius [fol. 18r] lapidis colorem pariter et sacramentum Moyses exposuit cum Dei habitum describens diceret, « Sub pedibus eius quasi opus lapidis saphiri » [Ex. 24:10]. Qui radiis percussus solis fulgorem ardentem ex se emittit, quia caelestibus semper intentus sanctorum animus, diuini luminis cotidie radiis innouatus, conpunctior quodam modo atque ardentior aeterna perquirat aliisque inquirenda persuadet. Nam quod in Rubro Mari repperiri dicitur, significat per Domini passionem et sacri baptismatis lauacrum mentes mortalium ad praesumenda caelestia sublimiter erigi. Tertius calcedonius³⁴.

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Carcedonius quasi ignis lucernae pallenti specie renitet, et habet fulgorem sub diuo, non in domo. Quo demonstrantur hi qui caelestis³⁵ desiderio subnixa hominibus tamen latent, et quasi in abscondito ieiunium, elimosinam, praecesque suas agunt [Matt. 6:2-6/16-18], sed uel cum doctrinae uel aliis sanctorum usibus inseruituri ad publicum procedere iubentur, mox quid fulgoris intus gesserint ostendunt. Nam quod sculpturis resistere, radiis autem solis iactu³⁶ uel digitorum adritu si excandeat, paleas ad se rapere dicitur, talibus merito congruit, qui a nullo suam fortitudinem uinci permittentes, ipsi potius fragiliores quosque in sui luminis ardorisque iura coniungunt. De quorum uno dicitur, « Illa erat³⁷ lucerna ardens et lucens » [John 5:35]. Ardens uidelicet amore, lucens sermone. Lumen enim [fol. 18v] uirtutum suarum et internae caritatis oleo ne deficiat semper refouent. Et in Aethiopiae prouinciae³⁸ nascitur, ut dicat eos sub ardente feruore³⁹ dilectionis, fama tamen obscura, quasi nigranti⁴⁰ cute sordere. Quartus smaragdus. Smaragdus nimiae uiriditatis est, adeo ut herbas uirentes frondesque, gemmas etiam superet omnes, inficiens circa se uiriditate repperit aerem. Qui mero et uiridi proficit oleo, quamuis natura inbuatur. Significat autem animas fide semper uirentes; quo enim magis aduersitate saeculi, quam figura cuiuslibet designat⁴¹, temptantur, eo amplius hereditatem inmarcibilem et aeternam conseruatam in caelis, et mente concipere sperando, et in proximos satagunt spargere praedicando. His eiusdem quoque lapidis patria tellus pulcherrima ratione congruit, tellus locuples sed inhabitabilis. Nam cum auro et gemmis affluat, grifes tenent uniuersa, alites ferocissimi uel potius fere⁴² uolantes; sunt enim quadrupedes, et corpore quidem leonibus, capite uero et alis aquilis simillime⁴³. Cum Arimaspiis dimicant,

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qui uno oculo in fronte media feruntur insignes, ut accipiant hos⁴⁴ lapides, mira cupiditate et feris rapientibus et Arimaspiis custodientibus. Hanc enim terram uirtutum thesauris abundantem audierat⁴⁵ Psalmista dicens, « Ecce elongaui fugiens, et mansi in solitudine » [Ps. 54:8].⁴⁶

[fol. 19r] Fugiens elongat qui a turba desideriorum⁴⁷ temporalium in alta Dei contemplatione se subleuat; manet uero in solitudine, quia perseuerat in remota mentis intentione.⁴⁸ Contra huius modi alites semen diuini Uerbi nobis praeripere anhelantes, quique sanctorum inuigilant simplici per caeleste desiderium intentione quasi uno oculo admirandi, ut gemmam fidei ceterarumque uirtutum inuestigare et effodere quaeant. Quo enim quoque⁴⁹ uirtus celsior est, eo pauciores habet cultores, grauioremque ab inmundis spiritibus persecutionem tolerat, qui uelut griphes horrendi meritorum deiectione terrestres, sed superba mentis altitudine uolucres, diuitias spirituales non sibi ad usum possidere, sed hominibus auferre indefesso labore decertant. Et quia tanto⁵⁰ fidei sublimitas per Euangelium mundo innotuit, aperte⁵¹ propter quattuor Euangelii libros quarto loco smaragdus ponitur. Quintus sardonix. Hic ex onice candorem, ex sardio ruborem trahens, ab utroque sardonici⁵² nomen accepit. Sunt enim genera eius plurima. Alius enim terrae rubrae similitudinem tenet; alius quasi per humanam unguem sanguis eniteat bicolor apparet; alius tribus coloribus, subterius nigro, medius candido, superius mineo consistit. Cui comparantur homines corporis passione rubicundi, spiritus puritate candidi, sed mentis sibimet humilitate dispecti cum apostolo protestantes, « Etsi exterior homo noster corrumpitur, sed tamen interior renouatur de die in diem » [2 Cor. 4:16], et iterum, « Nihil

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mihi conscius sum, sed non in hoc iustificatus sum » [1 Cor. 4:4], [fol. 19v] itemque Psalmista, « Quamquam homo imaginem Dei habeat », id est de uirtute mentis, « tamen uanae⁵³ conturbabitur » [Ps. 38:7], id est de infirmitate carnis. Quae quoniam et passio in corporis infirmitate uersatur, « qui enim occidunt corpus, animam autem non possunt occidere » [Matt. 10:28], et humilitas de eiusdem corporis fragilitate descendit cum dicitur, « Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius? » [Rom. 7:24] recte sardonix quinto fundamento inseritur, nam corpus nostrum quinque sensibus subsistere certum est. Sextus sardius. Sardius, qui ex integro sanguine⁵⁴ coloris est, martyrum gloriam significat, de qua dicitur, « Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum eius » [Ps. 115:15]. Merito sexto loco positus cum Dominus noster et sexta aetate saeculi incarnatus et sexta feria sit pro totius mundi salute crucifixus. Septimus crisolitus. Crisolitus lapis quasi aurum fulget, scintillas habens ardentes. Cuius specie figurantur hi qui intellectu supernae ueraeque sapientiae fulgentes uerba exortationis in proximos uel etiam uirtutum signa quasi scintillas ignis effundunt. Quorum et⁵⁵ Arator ait⁵⁶, mentis⁵⁷ instat amor, sermonibus aestuat ardor. Quod quia sole⁵⁸ spiritalis gratiae munere geritur, uenustissime septimo fundamento crisolitus inest. Septimo formi⁵⁹ enim numero solet Spiritus Sancti gratia figurari, de quo supra dicitur, « et a septem spiritibus qui in conspectu throni eius sunt » [Rev. 1:4].⁶⁰ Octauus berillus. Berillus est quasi consideres aquam solis fulgore percussam rubicundum ac decorum reddere colorem, sed non fulget nisi in sexangulam formam poliendo figuretur. Reper [fol. 20r] cussa⁶¹ enim angulorum splendor illius acuat[ur?]⁶². Significat autem homines ingenio quidem sagaces, sed

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amplius supernae [...⁶³] coloris similitudine gratiae lumine refulgentes. Nam quod aqua sensus altitudinem designet, Salomon testis est, qui ait, « Aqua profunda uerba ex ore uiri » [Prov. 18:4]. Sed non est perfecti fulgoris uel humana uel etiam diuina sapientia, nisi operum quoque consummatio subnectatur. Nam senario saepe numero perfectio designatur actionis, maxime cum in hoc numero mundi huius sit opus consummatum. Quodque tenentes⁶⁴ manum adurere dicitur, procul dubio patet quia quisquis sancto uiro coniungitur, eius nimirum bonae conuersationis igne recreatur. Nonus topazius. Topazius lapis quantum inuentione rarus, tantum mercium quantitate pretiosus est. Qui duos fertur habere colores, unum auri purissimi, et alterum aetheria claritate relucentem. Pinguido rosea uerecundaque puritas; uicinus lapidi crisoprasso magnitudini⁶⁵ uel colore, quia maxime lampas cum solis splendore percutitur, omnium gemmarum superans pretiosissimas claritates, in aspectum suum singulariter prouocans oculorum cupidissimam uoluptatem. Quem si polire uelis, obscuras; si naturae propriae relinquant, inradiat. Haec⁶⁶ regibus ipsis fertur esse mirabilis, ut inter diuitias suas nihil se simile possidere cognoscant. Cuius pulcherrima naturae qualitas contemplatiuae uitae decori dignissimae⁶⁷ comparatur. Hanc enim reges sancti, quorum cor est in manu Dei [Prov. 21:1], cunctis bonorum operum diuitiis uniuersisque uirtutum gemmis merito [fol. 20v] praeferunt, in eam maxime purae suae mentis intuitum aciemque dirigentes, tanto ardentius caelestis uitae dulcedinem animo conplectentes, quanto frequentius supernae gratiae fuerint splendore percussi. Habent ergo sancti uiri auream⁶⁸ colorem ex internae flamma caritatis; habent aetherium ex supernae contemplatione dulcedinis,

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qui saepe praesentis saeculi turbine uelut adtritu lime uilescit. Nom enim facile potest animus uno eodemque momento terrenis laboribus, aerumnis, curisque, et doloribus agi⁶⁹ et illa caelestis uitae gaudia tranquillae mentis statu delectatus intueri. Quin potius ingemiscendo proclamat, « Turbatus est », inquires, « prae ira oculus meus; inueteraui inter omnes inimicos meos » [Ps. 6:8]. Quod uero in insula Thebaide, quae Topazion appellatur, unde et ipse nomen accepit, inueniri dicitur, dupliciter intellegendum est, quia et illi⁷⁰ praecipue, id est Aegyptiorum regiones, monachorum gregibus abundant, et quicumque Soli iustitiae uicinus habitauerit, aetherei nimirum luminis fulgore coloratur. Et pulchre sicut in octauo ordine actiuae uitae perfectio, sic in nono speculatiuae suauitatis gemma ponitur, siue quia nouem ordines angelorum, quorum uitam imitatur, in Scriptura ⁷¹ sancta reperiantur, siue quia a perfectae beatitudinis denario uno tantum, ut ita dicam, gradu mortis abest. Cui summo desiderio propheta suspirans aiebat, « Ideo dilexi mandata tua super aurum et topazion » [Ps. 118:127], id est super omnem probata⁷² actionis claritatem superque omnem quae in hoc saeculo fieri potest contemplaui⁷³ gaudii sublimitatem, dulcissimo mandatorum tuorum delectabar [fol. 21r] amore. Quorum primum et maximum est, « Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde, tota anima, tota uirtute » [Mk. 12:30]. Quod non nisi in illo caelesti⁷⁴ regni culmine ad integrum perfici posse certissimum est. Decimus crisoprasus. Crisoprasus⁷⁵ est uiridis aureaquae⁷⁶ commixturae, quidam etiam purpureum iubar trahens, aureis interuenientibus guttis. Nascitur autem in India. Qui significat eos qui uiriditate⁷⁷ aeternae patriae perfectae caritatis fulgore promerentes eam etiam ceteris purpurea

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martyrii sui luce patefaciunt. Qui quoniam in eo quod praesentem uitam despiciunt, aeternam gloriam praeferunt, Domini in carne apparentis exempla sequuntur, iam uelut in India, id est prope solis ortum, meritorum suorum fulgor⁷⁸ ostendunt. Et qui uelut sol in regno Patris fulgere [Matt. 13:43] regique suo, cui nunc conpatiuntur, tunc conregnare desiderantes expectant, iure in decimo loco sunt positi. Per denarium enim quo Dominicae uineae cultores remunerantur [Matt. 20:1-16] aeterni regis percipienda imago figuratur. Ubi, quod in nono⁷⁹ gradu non poterat, perfecta dilectione Dei et proximi per omnia Decalogus implebitur. Undecimus iacinctus. Iacinctus in Aethiopia repperitur, ceruleum colorem habens. Optimus qui nec rarus est, nec densitate obtunsus, sed ex utraque⁸⁰ temperamento lucet, et purificatum suauiter florem trahit. Hic autem non rutilat aequaliter, sed cum caeli facie mutatur. Sereno autem⁸¹ perspicuus atque gratus est; nubilo coram oculis euanescit atque marcescit. Indicat autem animas caelesti semper intentioni deditas atque angelicae quodam modo, quantum mortalibus fas est, conuersationi propinquantes.

[fol. 21v] Quibus omni custodia discretionis cor seuare [Prov. 4:23] praecipitur, ne uel nimia sensus subtilitate⁸² callentes altiora se quaerere et fortiora se scrutari audeant (gloria enim Domini caelare⁸³ uerbum [Prov. 25:2], id est caute de Deo uel homine Christo philosophari) uel rursum desidia torpente⁸⁴ ad infirma fidei initia atque elementa exordii sermonum Dei relabuntur⁸⁵; quin potius uia regia gradientes a dextris et a sinistris per arma iustitiae [2 Cor. 6:7] tuti procedunt⁸⁶, aptaque temporis obseruantia cum caelo faciem mutantibus suis in pectoribus dicant, « Siue

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enim mente excedimus, Deo; siue sobrii sumus, uobis » [2 Cor. 5:13]. Quasi enim iacinctus circumdatus nubilo loquitur, « Non angustiamini in nobis, angustiamini autem in uisceribus uestris » [2 Cor. 6:12], et iterum, « Nihil enim iudicaui me scire inter uos nisi Christum Ihesum et hunc crucifixum » [1 Cor. 2:2]; et quasi in serena luce uisus ait, « Sapientiam loquimur inter perfectos » [Ibid. 6]. Duodecimus ametistus. Ametistus purpureus est, permixto uiolatio colore et quasi rose nitore, quasdamque leniter flammulas fundens. Sed et quidam⁸⁷ in purpura illius non ex toto igneum, sed quasi uinum rubens apparet. Purpureus ergo decor caelestis regni habitum, roseus uero atque uiolatus humilem sanctorum uerecundiam pretiosamque mortem designat, quorum uidelicet mens principaliter in summis erigitur, etiam cum exterius perpeti et⁸⁸ abiecta cernuntur, Dominici semper inter aduersa memor⁸⁹ promissi: « Nolite timere, pusillus grex, quia conplacuit Patri uestro dare uobis regnum » [Lk. 12:32]; quique flammam caritatis non ad se tantum inuicem, sed ad ipsos etiam persecutores spargentes, positis genibus [fol. 22r] implorant, « Domine, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum » [Acts 7:59], atque inter calicem passionis bibendum illius potius uini quod laetificat cor hominis iugi recordatione inaebrantur, quod Dominus se nouum cum discipulis suis in regno Patris bibiturum esse promisit [Matt. 26:29, Mk. 14:25]. In iaspide ergo fidei uiriditas, in saphiri⁹⁰ spei caelestis altitudo, in carcedone flamma caritatis internae figuretur⁹¹. In smaragdo autem eiusdem fidei fortis inter aduersa⁹² confessio, in sardonice⁹³ sanctorum inter uirtutes humilitas, in sardio reuerendus martyrum cruor exprimitur. In crisolito uero spiritalis inter miracula praedicatio, in berillo praedicantium perfecta operatio, in topazio

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eorundem ardens contemplatio monstratur. Porro in crisopraso beatorum martyrum opus pariter et praemium, in iacincto doctorum caelestis ad alta subleuatio et propter infirmos humilis ad humana discensio, in amatisto caelestis semper regni in humilium animo memoria designatur; singulique lapides pretiosi singulis sunt fundamentis deputati, qua⁹⁴ licet omnes perfecti quibus ciuitas Dei nostri in monte sancto eius ornatur atque fundatur spiritalis gratiae sint luce fulgentes, alii tamen per Spiritum datur sermo sapientiae, alii sermo scientiae, alii gratia sanitarum, alii genera linguarum, alteri fides in eodem Spiritu [1 Cor. 12:8-10]. Cuius artifex et conditor Deus, qui est fundamentum fundamentorum, et pro nobis etiam pontifex fieri dignatus est, ut proprii sanguinis hostia eiusdem moenia ciuitatis abluerit pariter atque dedicaret, omnia quaecumque habet Pater propria possidet [John 16:15].

[fol. 22v] Unde et pectore summi pontificis idem lapides, et ipsi patriarcharum nominibus inscripti, iubebantur inponi [Ex. 28:15-30], ut pulcherrime⁹⁵ mysterio panderetur omnia spiritalia charismataque⁹⁶ singuli quique⁹⁷ sanctorum uirum⁹⁸ et ex parte percipiebant in Mediatore Dei et hominum homine Christo Ihesu pariter et perfecte fuisse completa. Haec de lapidibus preciosis copiosius fortasse quam commaticum interpretandi genus dicebat uideor exposuisse. Necesse enim erat eorum naturas patriamque diligenter exponere, deinde sacramentum inuestigare solertius, sed et ordinem numerosque prosequi. Quantum uero ad ipsam rei funditatem pertinet, uideor mihi perpauca, et haec breuiter strictimque dixisse; lectoremque supplex obsecro ut, si recto me tramite uiderit incessisse, agat Deo gratias; sin uero secus quam uolebat euenisse

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depraehenderit, errori meo ueniam mecum a Domino deprecetur. Sed haec actenus; nunc ad coeptum reuertamur.⁹⁹ (21:21) SEQUITUR. Et platea ciuitatis aurum mundum tamquam uitrum perlucidum. RESPONSIO. Hisdem metallis plateas conponit quibus ciuitatem iam dixerat adornatam, multi enim etiam uitae latioris et inferioris summis in Ecclesia cincti uirtutibus et puritate mentis et radio fulgent operis.

NOTES ON CHAPTERS 20:11/12-21:21

- 1 It looks as if perhaps the scribe had first written 'uidit' and erased the 't'.
- 2 First written 'mundum'; 'm' corrected to 's' interlinearly.
- 3 Read 'cognitor'.
- 4 [Alia editio... ipsi noluerunt] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.20 (PL 93 193D)
- 5 The 'enti' of 'praescientiam' is interlinear.
- 6 [Id est... ante praecogniti] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.20 (PL 93, 194B)
- 7 Read 'inmortalitati'.
- 8 Read 'qualitas'.
- 9 [Iudicatis uidelicet...qualitas conueniat] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 194C)
- 10 The 'h' is interlinear.
- 11 Read 'mentiuntur'.
- 12 [De hoc...perducenda nuptias] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 195C-D)
- 13 'decora': the 'c' is interlinear; the word's ending was initially written 'um', but it was corrected to 'a' interlinearly.
- 14 Read 'plene'.
- 15 [Post ruinam...portare caelestem] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 195D)
- 16 'inexpugnabilem... Dominus' was forgotten by the scribe and added below in the bottom of the page.
- 17 [Id est...pandebant introitum] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 196A)
- 18 Read 'memoriam'.
- 19 [Memoria ueterum...cordibus insitam] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 196B)
- 20 [Possunt autem...fundamentum fundamentorum] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 196C-D)
- 21 Read 'perfectum'.

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- 22 [Christus qui...quadra subsistere] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 196C)
- 23 [difficile... florere uirtutibus] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 196A-197C)
- 24 The grammar would normally require 'parentem'.
- 25 'te ona ceniu' = 'o nate unice'.
- 26 Read 'mystice'.
- 27 Read 'qui'.
- 28 'non' is interlinear.
- 29 'iaspis' is written in the left margin.
- 30 'responsio' is interlinear.
- 31 Read 'uiridis'.
- 32 'alius niui et spumae marinorum fluctuum, quasi mixto cruori obrutilans': read 'alius niui et spumae marinorum fluctuum similis quasi mixto cruore obrutilans'.
- 33 Read 'omnes'.
- 34 First written 'carcedonius'; 'r' corrected to 'l' interlinearly.
- 35 Read 'caelesti'.
- 36 First written 'iacta'; 'a' corrected to 'u' interlinearly. Bede has 'ictu'. It still makes for a strange construction, but the sense is clear enough.
- 37 First written 'erit'; 'i' corrected to 'a' interlinearly.
- 38 Read 'prouincia'.
- 39 First written 'feuore'; the first 'r' added interlinearly.
- 40 First written 'nigrante', then the 'e' was changed to 'i'.
- 41 Bede has 'quam frigora Scythiae designant', which seems to make more sense.
- 42 Read 'ferae'.
- 43 Read 'simillimae'.
- 44 The 'h' is interlinear.
- 45 Read 'adierat'.
- 46 [Fundamentum primum... in solitudine] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93, 197C-199B)
- 47 'desideriorum': 'ri' is interlinear.
- 48 [Ecce elongauit... mentis intentione] Gregorius I, Moralia, 4.35 (PL 75, 676C)
- 49 Read 'quaeque'.
- 50 Read 'tanta'.
- 51 Read 'apte'.
- 52 Read 'sardonis'.
- 53 Read 'uane'.
- 54 Read 'sanguinei'.
- 55 Read 'ut'.
- 56 Arator Subdiaconus, De Actibus Apostolorum, liber primus.
- 57 Read 'mentibus'.
- 58 Read 'solo'.
- 59 There is a vertical stroke over the 'o' of 'septimo', possibly meant to correct it to an 'i'. In any case, it should obviously have been 'septiformi'.
- 60 [Contra huius... eius sunt]] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93 199C-200B)
- 61 Read 'repercussu'.
- 62 Read 'acuitur'.
- 63 There is an undecipherable word here.

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- 64 Read 'tenentis'.
- 65 Read 'magnitudine'.
- 66 Read 'hic'.
- 67 Read 'dignissime'.
- 68 Read 'aureum'.
- 69 Read 'angi'.
- 70 Read 'illae'.
- 71 There is something (a very small word or a couple of letters) undecipherable here. Probably a mistake of some kind without any meaning.
- 72 Read 'probatae'.
- 73 Read 'contemplatiui'.
- 74 Read 'caelestis'.
- 75 'crisoprasus' was both times first written 'crisoprassus', and one of the 's' was erased in both.
- 76 Read 'aureaeque'.
- 77 Read 'uiriditatem'.
- 78 Read 'fulgur'.
- 79 First written 'nouo', then 'u' corrected to 'n' interlinearly.
- 80 Read 'utroque'.
- 81 Read 'enim'.
- 82 This words appears in the MS as 'subli tate', with 'ti' added interlinearly, and something seems to have been erased between 'sub(ti)li' and 'tate'. It was probably first written 'sublimitate'.
- 83 Read 'celare'.
- 84 Read 'torpentes'.
- 85 Read 'relabantur'.
- 86 Read 'procedant'.
- 86 Read 'quiddam'.
- 87 'et' is a mistaken addition.
- 89 Read 'memores'.
- 90 Read, of course, 'saphiro'.
- 91 Read 'figuratur'.
- 92 'ad' is interlinear.
- 93 First written 'sardoniae', corrected interlinearly.
- 94 Read 'quia'.
- 95 Read 'pulcherrimo'.
- 96 Read 'charismata quae'.
- 97 'singuli quique': first written 'singulique'; 'qui' added interlinearly.
- 98 Read 'uiritim'.
- 99 [Octauus berillus... ad coeptum reuertamur] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93 200B-203C)

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(21:23) INTERROGATIO. Et ciuitas non eget sole neque luna ut luceant in ea. RESPONSIO. Quia non lumine aut elementis mundi regitur Ecclesia, sed Christo aeterno sole deducitur per mundi tenebras. SEQUITUR. Nam claritas Dei inluminabit eam. RESPONSIO. Ipso enim lumine fruimur¹ in patria, quo nunc regimur gradientes [fol. 23r] in uia. Eodem informati inter bona malaque discernimus quo tunc beatificati sola quae bona sunt cernimus².

(21:24) INTERROGATIO. Et ambulabunt gentes per lumen eius. RESPONSIO. Significat quod idem ipse Agnus nunc sit peregrinantibus uia qui tunc ciuibus uita. (21:25) SEQUITUR. Et portae eius non claudentur per diem. Nox enim non erit illic. RESPONSIO. Lumen Agni perpetuum, immo ipsum pro lumine sempiterno in illa ciuitate sublato noctis tempore memorat futurum. Quod autem portae non claudentur, plenissime securitatis indicium est. Non enim iam ibi dicitur, « Uigilate et orate ne intretis in temptationem » [Matt. 26:41, Mk. 14:38], sed potius, « Uacate et uidete quoniam ego sum Deus » [Ps. 45:11].

(21:27) INTERROGATIO. Nec intrauit in ea aliquid coinquinatum. RESPONSIO. Illius temporis describit Ecclesiam quando iam malis de medio segregatis soli cum Christo boni regnabunt. Sed et nunc omnis inmundus et mendax non est in Ecclesia, nec uidet lumen ciuitatis Dei qui eam odit, quia tenebrae excecauerunt oculos eius [1 John 2:11].³ Non hic sed ibi erit gentium curatio uera, redemptio plena, felicitas sempiterna.⁴ (Finit de Apocalypsi.⁵) Denique tanto tandem tamque ⁶ labore explicito obnixè deprecor ut, si qui nostrum hoc opusculum lectione dignum duxerint, auctorem quoque operis Domino commendare meminerint.⁷ Nam nonnulla ex magistrorum

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traditione uel lectionis memoria excerpimus. Nam et hoc in praeceptis habemus, ut percepta talenta cum usuris referamus ad Dominum.⁸ De numerorum peritia [...] nonnulla etiam [...] diuersus [...] numerus sicut per [...] Beda [...] dicit, in septem diuiduntur periochis, et in quintam [fol. 23v] regulam suae praefationis tropum legitimis numeris uigere dicit tropo sinedoche, aut parte totum aut toto partem. Quo locutionis modo etiam illa de resurrectione Christi soluitur quaestio. Pars enim nouissima diei quo passus est nisi pro tota die accipiatur, id est adiuncta etiam nocte praeterita, et nox in cuius parte ultima resurrexit nisi totus dies accipiatur, adiuncto scilicet inlucescente die Dominino, non possunt esse tres dies et tres noctes, quibus se in corde terrae dixit futurum [Matt. 12:40]. Legitimos autem numeros dicit quos eminentius diuina Scriptura commendat, sicut septenarium, uel denarium⁹, uel duodenarium, quibus plerumque uel uniuersitas temporis, uel rei alicuius perfectio designetur¹⁰, sicut, ut iam dictum est, « Septies in die laudem dixi tibi » [Ps. 118:164], nihil est aliud quam « Semper laus eius in ore meo » [Ps. 33:2].¹¹ Quid per septenario numero nisi summa perfectionis accipitur? Idcirco igitur septenarius numerus perfectus dicitur quia ex primo pari constat et primo impari: ex primo qui diuidi potest et primo qui diuidi non potest. Hinc est enim quod perfectione septiformis gratiae implendi duodecim sunt apostoli electi. A septenario quippe numero in duodenarium surgitur. Nam septenarius suis in se partibus multiplicatus ad duodenarium tenditur. Siue enim quattuor per tria, seu tria per quattuor ducantur¹², septem in duodecim uertunt. Unde sancti apostoli, quia Trinitatem in quattuor partibus mundi praedicare mittebantur, duodecim sunt electi, ut etiam numero

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perfectionem ostenderent quam uita et uoce praedicarent.¹³ Ecce in promptu **[fol. 24r]** uterque est, petitionis atque uoluntatis suae¹⁴ expletio. Prout tempus locusque concessit fauente Deo paruimus uolentes instructi ab apostolo, qui iubet nos paratos esse ad satisfactionem omni poscenti [1 Pet. 3:15]. Scio qui dixit, « Aperi os tuum et ego adimplebo illud » [Ps. 80:11]. Festinemus ambulare dum lux est, ueniet autem nox quando poterit ambulare nemo [Cf. John 9:4]. Imitemur eum de quo scriptum est, « timens Deum et recedens a malo » [Job 1:1]. **(DE LIBRO IOB¹⁵)** Deum timere est nulla quae facienda sunt bona praeterire, sicut scribitur, « Qui Deum timet, nihil neglegit » [Eccles. 7:19]. Neque enim bona Deo accepta sunt, quae ante eius oculos malorum admixtione maculantur.¹⁶ Iterum Deum benedicere [Job 1:5], id est maledicere, est de eius munere sibi gloriam praeberere. Unde recte sanctis apostolis post praedicationem Dominus pedes lauit [John 13:5 et seq.], ut uidelicet aperte monstraret quia plerumque et in bono opere peccati puluis contrahitur, et inde inquinantur uestigia loquentium, unde audientium corda mundantur. Nam saepe¹⁷ nonnulli, dum exhortationis uerba faciunt, quamlibet tenuiter, sese intrinsecus, quia per eos purgationis gratia deriuatur, extollunt, cumque uerbo aliena opera diluunt, quasi ex bono itinere puluerem malae cogitationis sumunt.¹⁸ Quid de sancto uiro laudabilius dici potuit, « Simplex et rectus, timens Deum et recedens a malo » [Job 1:1]? Quisquis aeternam patriam appetit simplex procul dubio et rectus uiuit. Simplex uidelicet opere, rectus fide. Simplex in bonis quae inferius peragit, rectus in summis quae in intimis sentit. Sunt namque nonnulli qui in bonis quae faciunt simplices non sunt, dum non in his retributionem interius, sed exterius **[fol. 24v]**

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fauorem quaerunt. Quibus et dicitur, « Uae peccatori terram ingredientem¹⁹ duabus uiis » [Sir. 2:14]. Duabus quippe uiis peccator terram ingreditur, quando et Dei est quod opere exhibet, et mundi quod per cogitationem quaerit.²⁰ Uiri igitur lxxx qui de Sichem et de Silo et Samaria portantes²¹ in domo Domini munera in medio ciuitatis leguntur interisse [Jer. 41:5-7], quia diuinis deditae operibus mentes, nisi magna se circumspectione custodiant, subripiente hoste, dum deuotionis portant hostiam, in ipso itinere perdunt uitam. De cuius hostis manu non euaditur nisi citius ad paenitentiam recurratur. Decim autem uiri reperti sunt inter eos qui dixerunt ad Ismahel, « Noli occidere nos, quia habemus thesauros in agro frumenti et hordei et olei et mellis » [Jer. 41:8], et non occidit eos. Thesaurus quippe est in agro spes in penitentia. Quae quia non cernitur, quasi in terra cordis suffossa continetur. Qui ergo thesauros in agro habuere seruati sunt, quia qui post incautelae suae uitium ad lamentum redeunt, nec capti moriuntur. Ecce magna dulcedinis consolatio, tena ceniu²². Cum uero antiquus hostis neque in exordio intentionis fuerit neque in itinere actionis intercipit, duriores in fine laqueos tendit. Quem tanto nequius obsidet, quantum solum sibi remansisse ad decipiendum uidet. Hos namque fine suo appositos laqueos conspexerat qui dicebat, « Ipsi calcaneum meum obseruabant » [Ps. 55:7]. Quia enim in calcaneo finis est corporis, quid per hunc nisi terminus signatur actionis? Siue ergo maligni spiritus seu prauis quique homines illorum superbiae sequaces calcaneum obseruabunt cum actionis bonae finem uitare desiderant.

[fol. 25r] Unde et eidem serpenti dicitur, « Ipsa tuum obseruabit caput, et tu eius calcaneum » [Gen. 3:15]. Caput

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quippe serpentis obseruare est initia suggestionis eius aspicere. Qui tamen cum ab initio depraehenditur, percutere calcaneum molitur, quia etsi²³ suggestionem primam in intentione non percutit, decipere in finem²⁴ tendit. Si autem semel cor in intentione corrumpitur, sequentis actionis medietas et terminus ab hoste callido secure possidetur, quoniam totam sibi arborem fructus ferre conspicit, quam ueneni dente in radice uitiauit. Ergo summa cura uigilandum est ne uel bonis operibus seruiens mens intentione reproba polluat, quia nullum est bonum quod foris agitur, si non pro eo intus ante Dei oculos innocentiae uictima in ara cordis immoletur. Tota itaque uirtute perspicendum est fluuius operis si purus emanat e fonte cogitationis; omni cura seruandus est a malitia²⁵ puluere oculus cordis, ne hoc quod in actione rectum hominibus ostendat, apud semetipsum per uitium prauae intentionis intorqueat. Curandum itaque est ne bona nostra pauca sint, curandum ne indiscussa, ne aut pauca agentes inueniamur steriles, aut indiscussa relinquentes uecordes. Neque enim unaquaque uere uirtus est, si mixta aliis uirtutibus non est. Unde recte ad Moysen dicitur, « Sume tibi aromata, stacten, et cetera, faciesque tymiama compositum mixtum diligenter et purum » [Ex. 30:34-35]. Tymiama quippe ex aromatibus compositum facimus cum in altare boni operis uirtutum multiplicitate redolemus. Quod **[fol. 25v]** mixtum et purum fit, quia quantum uirtus uirtuti iungitur, tanto incensum boni operis sincerius exhibetur. Et in tenuissimum puluerem aromata uniuersa conterimus [Ex. 30:36] cum bona nostra quasi in pilo cordis occulta discussione tundimus²⁶ et si ueraciter bona sint subtiliter retractamus.²⁷ Curandum ergo est ne, cum mala uincimus, bonis lasciuiantibus subplantemur, ne fortasse fluxa prodeant, ne

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incircumspecta capiantur, ne per errorem uiam deserant, ne per lassitudinem fracta anteacti laboris meritum perdant. In cunctis enim uigilanter debet se mens circumspicere, atque in²⁸ ipsa circumspectionis suae prouidentia perseuerare. In cassum quippe bonum agitur, si ante terminum uitae deseratur, quia et frustra uelociter currit qui priusquam ad metas ueniat deficit. Hinc Ioseph, qui inter fratres usque ad finem iustus perseuerasse describitur, solus talem tonicam habuisse perhibetur [Gen. 37:23]. Nam quid est talaris tunica nisi actio consummata? Quasi enim propensa tunica talum corporis operit, cum bona actio ante Dei oculos usque ad uitae nos terminum tegit. Hinc est quod per Moysen caudam hostiae in altari offerre praecipitur [Ex. 29:22; Lev. 3:9, 7:3], ut uidelicet omne bonum cum incipimus, etiam perseueranti fine compleamus. Bene igitur coepta cunctis diebus agenda sunt, ut cum mala²⁹ pugnando repellitur, ipsa boni uictoria constantiae manu teneatur.³⁰ Duobus etenim modis totus regitur mundus, uoluntate uidelicet Dei et permissione. Fiunt ergo omnia quae uult, et permittit fieri quae [fol. 26r] non uult. Sciendum uero est quia Satanae uoluntas semper iniqua est, sed nonnumquam³¹ potestas iusta³², quia a semetipso uoluntatem habet, sed a Domino potestatem. Quod enim ipse facere iniquae³³ appetit, hoc Deus fieri non nisi iuste permittit.³⁴ Cum enim in hac uita ea quae nolumus³⁵ patimur, necesse est ut ad eum qui iniustum uelle nil potest studia nostrae uoluntatis inclinemus. Si igitur iusta placere Domino scimus, pati autem nulla nisi quae Domino placuerint possumus, iusta sunt cuncta quae patimur, et ualde iniustum est si de iusta passione murmuramus.³⁶ Duobus quippe modis labiis delinquimus [ref. to Job 2:10], cum aut iniusta dicimus, aut iusta reticemus. Nam si

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aliquando et tacere culpa non esset, propheta non diceret, « Uae mihi quia tacui » [Is. 6:5].³⁷ Et, sicut quidam poeta ait, aliquando utiliores sunt inimici rixantes quam amicos³⁸ obiurgare metuentes. Est enim quod et in calliditate Diaboli, quae innumerabilibus constat modis, cauere debeamus. Saepe antiquus hostis, postquam menti nostrae temptationum certamen inflixerit, ab ipso suo certamine ad tempus recedit, non ut inlatae³⁹ malitiae, quae inextricabilis permanet, finem praebeat, sed corda quae per quietem secura reddiderit repente rediens facilius inopinatos⁴⁰ inrumpat. Sic nos licet indignos diuina pietas deserit, ut custodiat; sic custodit ut tamen permissio temptationis articulo statum nobis nostrae infirmitatis ostendat^{41,42} Perfecta enim mens solerter inuigilet⁴³ ut non solum **[fol. 26v]** peruersa agere rennuat, sed omne etiam quod in se per cogitationes turpiter liquatur tergeat. Sed saepe de ipsa uictoria bellum oritur, ut, cum inmunda⁴⁴ cogitatio uincitur, uictoris animus elatione pulsetur. Sic ergo mentem necesse est per munditiam erigi, ut tamen sollicitus⁴⁵ debeat in humilitate substerni. Nam si cui elatio mentem pulsauerit, mox in sterquilinio sedere [Job 2:8] festinet. In sterquilinio quippe sedere est uilia de se quempiam et abiecta sentire. In sterquilinio⁴⁶ nobis sedere est ad ea quae inlicite gessimus mentis oculos penitendo reducere, ut, cum ante nos peccatorum stercora cernimus, omne quod in animo de elatione surgit inclinemus. In sterquilinio sedet qui infirmitatem suam sollicitus respicit, et sese de bonis quae per gratiam perceperit non extollit.⁴⁷ Quaerendum procul dubio est: cum ualde occulta sint diuina iudicia, quur in hac uita nonnumquam bonis male sit, malis bene, tunc occultiora sunt cum et bonis hic bene est, et malis male. Nam cum bonis male est et malis bene, hoc fortasse

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depraehenditur, quia et boni si qua deliquerunt, hic recipiunt, ut ab aeterna plenius damnatione liberentur; et mali bona quae pro hac uita faciunt, hic inueniunt, ut ad sola in posterum tormenta pertrahantur.⁴⁸ De quibus propheta cum doloris ammiratione dicebat, « Ecce ipsi peccatores et abundantes in saeculo obtinuerunt diuitias » [Ps. 72:12]. Unde et ardenti in inferno diuiti dicitur, « Memento, fili, quia recepisti bona in uita tua, et Lazarus **[fol. 27r]** similiter mala » [Lk. 16:25]. At cum bonis hic bene est et malis male, incertum ualde fit utrum boni idcirco bona accipiant ut prouocati ad aliquid melius crescant, an iusto latentique iudicio hic suorum operum remunerationem percipiant ut a proemiis uitae sequentis inanescant; et utrum malos idcirco aduersa feriant ut ab aeternis suppliciis corrigentia defendant, an hic eorum poena incipiat ut quandoque complenda eos ad ultima Gehennae tormenta perducant. Quia ergo inter diuina iudicia graui incertitudinis suae caligine humana mens premitur, sancti uiri, cum sibi subpetere prospera huius mundi conspiciunt, pauida suspicione turbantur. Timent enim ne hic laborum suorum fructus recipiant, timent ne quod diuina iustitia latens in eis uulnus aspiciat, et exterioribus eos muneribus cumulans ab intimis repellat. Cum uero taciti cogitant quod nec bona agant nisi ut soli Domino placeant, nec in ipsa affluentia suae prosperitatis exultant, minus quidem de prosperis occultata contra se iudicia metuunt, sed tamen eadem prospera, quia se ab intima intentione praepediunt, egre ferunt, et moleste praesentis uitae blandimenta tolerant, quia per haec se utcumque tardari et inretiri in interno desiderio non ignorant. Plus enim in hoc mundo honor quam dispectio occupat, et magis prosperitatis sublimitas quam necessitatis aduersitas grauat.

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Per hanc namque nonnumquam cum homo exterius premitur, ad concupiscenda quae intus sunt liberior relaxatur; per illam uero animus, dum multis parere cogitur, a desiderii sui cursu retinetur. **[fol. 27v]** Unde fit ut sancti uiri magis in hoc mundo prospera quam aduersa formident. Sciunt namque quia dum mens⁴⁹ blanda occupatione premitur, aliquando libens ad exteriora diriuatur. Sciunt quia saepe si⁵⁰ hanc clandestina cogitatio decipit ut quomodo permutetur ignoret. Pensant autem⁵¹ quae sint aeterna bona quae cupiunt, et cognoscunt quam nihil sit omne quod blandum temporaliter arridet.⁵² Dum tempus illis arridet dispicientes pro nihilo ducunt. Mundus fugientes post florens currit, sed hi nimirum quorum Christus uita et gloria et propria consolatio parui pendentes calcant, cunctaque huius mundi prospera mens eorum eo egre tolerat, quo supernae felicitatis est amore sauciata, tantoque magis in praesentis dulcedinis aspernatione erigitur, quanto hanc conspicit quia furtiue sibi in aeternae gloriae dispectu blanditur.⁵³ Hinc etenim Iob dicit, « Quare data est misero lux » [Job 3:20]. In Scriptura sacra nonnumquam lucis appellatione prosperitas, noctis autem nomine huius mundi aduersitas designatur. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur, « Sicut tenebrae eius, ita et lumen eius » [Ps. 138:12]. Quia enim sancti uiri ita prosperitatem saeculi despicientes calcant, sicut et aduersitatem eius calcantes tolerant⁵⁴, per magnam mentis celsitudinem mundi sibi et aduersa et prospera substernentes dicunt, « Sicut tenebrae eius, ita et lumen eius », ac si aperte dicant, « Sicut intentionis nostrae fortitudinem eius tristitia⁵⁵ non premunt, ita nunc⁵⁶ nec blanda corrumpunt ». Sancti uiri qui se in huius exilii **[fol. 28r]** aerumna miseros agnoscunt, clarescere in eius prosperitate refugiant. Lux etenim miseris

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datur quando hi qui sublimia contemplantes esse se in hac peregrinatione miseros agnoscunt, claritatem transitoriae prosperitatis accipiunt, et cum ualde defleant quia tarde ad patriam redeunt, tolerare insuper honoris onera compelluntur. Amor eos aeternorum conterit, et gloria de temporalibus arridet. Qui dum cogitant quae sint quae in infimis tenent, et quae sint quae de sublimibus non uident; quae sint quae se in terrena⁵⁷ fulciunt, quae autem de caelestibus perdiderunt, prosperitatis suae maerore mordentur, quia etsi uident nequaquam se ab ea funditus opprimi, pensent⁵⁸ tamen sollicite cogitationem suam in amorem⁵⁹ Domini et in eius dispensatione partiri. Unde bene cum dicit, « Quare data est misero lux », protinus adiungit, « et uita his qui in amaritudine animae sunt » [Job 3:20]. In amaritudine quippe animae sunt omnes electi, quia uel puniri flendo non desinunt quae deliquerunt, uel graui se maerore afficiunt quia longe huc a facie Conditoris proiecti adhuc in aeternae patriae gaudiis non sunt. De quorum corde bene per Salomonem dicitur, « Cor quod nouit amaritudinem animae suae, in gaudio illius non miscebitur extraneus » [Prov. 14:10]. In amaritudine namque sunt et corda reproborum, quia ipsis etiam prauis suis desideriis affliguntur, sed eandem amaritudinem nesciunt, quia pensare quod tolerant sponte sua excaecati non possunt. At contra cor bonorum amaritudinem suam nouit, quia aerumna exilii in qua proiectus est laceratus [fol. 28v] intellegit quam⁶⁰ sunt tranquilla quae perdidit, quam confusa in quibus cecidit sentit. Sed hoc amaricatum cor ad gaudium suum quandoque reducit, atque in eius gaudio extraneus non miscetur, quia is qui nunc ab hoc maerore cordis foras se per desideria eicit, seclusus tunc ab illa⁶¹ intima eius sollemnitate remanebit. Hi itaque qui in

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amaritudine animae sunt mori mundo funditus concupiscunt, ut, sicut in saeculo ipsi nil appetunt, ita iam a saeculo nulla obligatione teneantur.⁶² Unde Paulus discipulos vivere cupiens mortuos clamat, « Mortui enim estis, et uita uestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo » [Col. 3:3]. Qui ergo mortem quaerit, gaudet dum sepulchrum inuenerit [Job 3:21-22], quia qui mortificare se appetit, ualde ad inuentam requiem contemplationis hilarescit, ut extinctus mundo lateat, et ⁶³ cunctis externarum rerum perturbationibus intra sinum se intimi amoris abscondit^{64,65} Qui igitur thesaurum quaerit, gaudet cum sepulchrum inuenerit, quia sapientiam perquirentes cum sacrae Scripturae paginas uoluimus, cum exempla praecedentium perscrutamur, quasi ex sepulchro gaudium sumimus, quia mentis diuitias apud mortuos inuenimus. Quia qui⁶⁶ huic mundo perfectae⁶⁷ extincti sunt in occulto cum diuitiis requiescunt. Sepulchro ergo diues efficitur qui per exempla iustorum in contemplationis uirtute subleuatur. Adhuc beatus Iob dicit, « Uiro cuius abscondita est uia » [Job 3:23]. Uia enim sua uiro abscondita est, quia etsi iam in qua sit uitae qualitate considerat, adhuc tamen ad quem finem tendat ignorat; etsi iam superna appetit, etsi plenius haec desideriiis quaerit, **[fol. 29r]** adhuc si in eisdem desideriiis permaneat nescit. Peccata quippe deserentes ad iustitiam tendimus, et unde uenimus nouimus, sed quo perueniamus ignoramus. Animaduerte, o tena ceniu⁶⁶, quam incerta et periculosa sit hac⁶⁹ uita, in qua nullus securus esse potest, quia securitas est mater negligentiarum. Quid hesternae die fuimus scimus, sed quid contingat crastina nos esse nescimus. Uia ergo sua uiro abscondita est, quia sic pedem ponit operis ut tamen praeuidere nequeat exitum consummationis eius, et quia

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nonnumquam ea ipsa quae recta nos agere credimus an in districti Iudicis examine recta sint ignoramus. Saepe enim opus nostrum causa damnationis est, et prouectus putatur esse uirtutis. Saepe unde placari Iudex creditur, inde ad irascendum placidus instigatur; sicut scriptum est, « Est uia quae uidetur hominibus recta, nouissima autem eius deducunt ad mortem » [Prov. 14:12]. Unde sancti uiri, cum mala superant, sua etiam bene gesta formidant, ne cum bona agere appetunt, de actionis imaginem⁷⁰ fallantur, ne pestifera tabes putredinis sub boni specie lateat coloris. Sciunt enim quia corruptionis adhuc pondere grauati diiudicare bona subtiliter nesciunt, et cum ante oculos extremi examinis regulam deducunt, haec ipsa in se nonnumquam et quae adprobant metuunt, et tota quidem mente interna desiderant, sed tamen de incertitudine trepidi quo gradiuntur ignorant. Nouissime tenebris Deus circumdare hominem [Job 3:23] dicit⁷¹, quia quamuis caelesti desiderio ferueat, quid de semetipso sit dispositum intrinsecus ignorat, et ualde metuit ne quid sibi in iudicio [fol. 29v] obuiet quod se de se nunc et in desiderio boni feruoris lateat. An tenebris circumdatus non est qui plerumque praeteritorum non meminit, futura non inuenit, praesentia uix cognoscit? Quas nimirum caecitatis nostrae tenebras cum studiose conspiciamus, mentem ad lamenta prouocamus. Flet enim caecitatem quam foris patitur, si humiliter meminit quod in interioribus lumine priuatur, omnique intentionis adnisi semetipsam concutit, et supernam lucem quam condita deseruit repulsa quaerit.⁷² « In lectulo », inquit⁷³, « meo per noctes quaesiui quem diligit anima mea; quaesiui illum et non inueni » [Song 3:1]. Abscondit se sponsus cum quaeritur, ut non inuentus ardentius quaeratur, et differtur quaerens sponsa ne

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inueniat, ut tarditate sua capatior reddita multiplicitus quandoque inueniat quod quaerebat.⁷⁴ « Antequam », inquit, « comedam, suspiro » [Job 3:24]. Suspirat ergo antequam comedat, quia prius gemitu tribulationis afficitur, et postmodum contemplationis refectione satiatur. Nisi enim suspirat, non comedit, quia si⁷⁵ se in hoc exilio ⁷⁶ desideriorum caelestium lamenta non humiliat, internae⁷⁷ patriae gaudia non degustat. A ueritatis enim pabulo ieiuni sunt qui in hac peregrinationis inopia laetantur. Suspirat autem qui comedit, quia quos amor ueritatis afficit, etiam refectio contemplationis pascit. Suspirans propheta comedebat cum diceret, « Fuerunt mihi lacrimae meae panes » [Ps. 41:4]. Luctu enim suo anima pascitur, cum ad superna gaudia flendo subleuatur, et intus quidem doloris sui gemitum tolerat, sed eo refectionis pabulum percipit, quo uis⁷⁸ amoris per lacrimas emanat.⁷⁹ Electi ergo dum [fol. 30r] mentis suae oculis diuina iudicia apponunt; dum de occulta super se sententia trepidant; dum se ad Deum peruenire posse confidunt, sed tamen ne non perueniant metuunt⁸⁰; dum praeteritorum suorum recolunt quae deflent; dumque⁸¹ sibi adhuc futura sunt quia nesciunt pertimescunt, quasi quaedam in eis aquarum⁸² inundatio defluit [ref. to Job 3:24]. Iusti igitur deflent et paudent et magnis se lamentis cruciant, quia se deseri formidant, et quamuis de correctione sua gaudeant, eorum tamen trepidam mentem correctio ipsa perturbat, ne malum quod tolerant non pia percussio disciplinae sit, sed animaduersio iusta uindictae. Quod bene Psalmista considerans ait, « Quis nouit potestatem irae tuae? » [Ps. 89:11] Potestas quippe diuinae irae nostrae menti non potest conpraehendi, quia eius dispensatio obscuris super nos dispositionibus saepe unde aestimatur deserere, inde nos recipit, et unde

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nos recipere creditur, inde derelinquit, ut plerumque hoc fiat gratia quod ira dicitur, et hoc aliquando ira sit quod gratia putatur. Nonnullos enim flagella corrigunt, nonnullos ad impatientiae uesaniem perducunt; et alios prospera, quia demulcent, ab insania mitigant, alios, quia eleuant, funditus ab omni spe conuersationis eradicant. Cunctos autem uitia ad ima pertrahunt, sed tamen quidam eo ab his facilius redeunt, quo se in eis corruisse altius erubescunt; et semper uirtutes ad superna subleuant, sed nonnumquam quidam, dum tumorem de uirtute concipiunt, per ipsum tramitem ascensionis cadunt. Quia ergo potestas diuinae irae minime cognoscitur, in cunctis necesse est ut sine cessatione **[fol. 30v]** timeatur.⁸³ Ut enim cuiuslibet facta digniora sint, necesse est ut ei apud se semper indigna uideantur, ne eadem bona actio agentis cor subleuet, et subleuando plus auctorem de elatione deiciat, quam ipsos forte quibus inpenditur iubeat^{84.85} Electi igitur licet in potestate positi quiescunt [ref. to Job 3:26], cum terrenarum actionum strepitus pro diuino amore intermittendo postponunt, ne, dum ima indesinenter occupant, cor funditus a summis cadat. Sciunt enim quia nequaquam mens ad superna⁸⁶ adtollitur, si curarum tumultibus continue in infimis occupatur. Quid enim de Deo occupata obtineat, quae de illo adpraehendere aliquid etiam uacans laborat? Bene autem⁸⁷ per Psalmistam dicitur, « Uacate et uidete quia ego sum Deus » [Ps. 45:11], quia qui uacare Deo neglegit, suo sibi iudicio lumen eius uisionis abscondit. Quia⁸⁸ ergo rebus temporalibus occupantur, tunc bene exteriora disponunt, cum sollicite ad interiora refugiant⁸⁹, cum nequaquam foras perturbationum strepitus diligunt, sed apud semetipsos intus in tranquillitatis sinu requiescunt.⁹⁰ Omnis quippe homo, eo ipso quo homo est, suum

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intellegere debet Auctorem, cuius uoluntati tanto magis seruit, quanto se, quia de se ipso nihil sit, pensat. Ecce autem conditi Deum considerare neglegimus. Adhibita sunt praecepta: praeceptis quoque obtemperare noluiamus. Adiunguntur⁹¹ exempla: ipsa quoque imitare declinamus. Erranti igitur homini data est lex. Erranti uero etiam sub lege adducitur testimonium eorum qui extra legem sunt; ut, quia conditi conditionis nostrae ordinem seruare noluiamus, praeceptis admoneremur; quia praeceptis oboediri⁹² contempsimus, [fol. 31r] exemplis confunderemur, nec, ut dictum est, eorum exemplis quos lex astringeret, sed quos lex a peccato nulla cohiberet. Circumscripsit nos diuina prouidentia; circumuenit excusationem nostram. Undique conclusus est aditus tergiuersationis humanae.⁹³ Ipsa diuina prouidentia qui⁹⁴ nostram sapienter conclusit excusationem, ipsa etiam muniat, tueatur, et confirmet fragilitatem nostram. Cui est gloria, honor, et uirtus in saecula saeculorum. Amen. Hunc accipe auide nostrum et sume laborem, et in hoc fessa laterculo refoue uiscera. Hunc lege, scribe, bibe, et manduca. In his dormi⁹⁵ et requiescito aquis. In hac pagella, prata uidelicet amoena, balneare. Haec est medicina tuorum uulnerum dolorum, haec suppletio tuae inopportune petitionis, haec meditatio mentis tramesque tuae⁹⁶ intentionis. Tantum ualeas quantum uolo⁹⁷, tantumque uigeas quantum opto, et tantum floreas quantum desidero. Uiue, nate, felix Christo donante. Precamur. Agne Dei, mundi qui crimina tulisti cuncta, conseruare qui est mitis ab hoste tuam⁹⁸.

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NOTES ON CHAPTERS 21:23-END

- 1 Read "fruemur".
- 2 Read 'cernemus'.
- 3 [Et platea... oculos eius] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93 203D-204A)
- 4 [ibi erit... felicitas sempiterna] Beda, Explanatio Apocalypsis, 1.21 (PL 93 204C)
- 5 'Finit de Apocalypsi' is written in the right margin.
- 6 A word was left out by the scribe: 'periculoso'.
- 7 [tanto tandem... commendare meminerint] Patres ecclesiae anglicanae: Beda page 452; J.-H. Parker, 1844
- 8 [Nam et... ad Dominum] Beda PL 93. EPIGRAMMA DE BEATO IOANNE ET EIUS APOCALYPSI. 134B
- 9 'uel denarium' is interlinear.
- 10 Read 'designatur'.
- 11 [regulam suae... ore meo] Beda PL 93. EPIGRAMMA DE BEATO IOANNE ET EIUS APOCALYPSI. 132C
- 12 First written 'dicantur'; corrected interlinearly.
- 13 [Quid per... uoce praedicarent] Gregorius I, Moralia. 1.13 (PL 75 534A)
- 14 It should probably be 'tua'.
- 15 'De libro Iob' is written in the right margin.
- 16 [Neque enim... admixtione maculantur] Gregorius I, Moralia, 1.3 (PL 75 530B)
- 17 The 'pe' of 'saep' is interlinear.
- 18 [Iterum Deum... cogitationis sumunt] Gregorius I, Moralia, 1.5,23 (PL 75 531C-542A)
- 19 Read 'ingredienti'.
- 20 [Quisquis aeternam... cogitationem quaerit] Gregorius I, Moralia, 1.26 (PL 75 544A)
- 21 Either 'qui' is a mistaken addition, or 'portantes' should be 'portabant'.
- 22 'tena ceniu' = 'nate unice'.
- 23 'etsi': 'si' is interlinear.
- 24 Read 'fine'.
- 25 Read 'malitia'.
- 26 First written 'tendimus'; 'e' corrected to 'u' interlinearly.
- 27 [Uiri igitur... subtiliter retractamus] Gregorius I, Moralia, 1.31 (PL 75 551C-553A)
- 28 'in' is interlinear.
- 29 Read 'malum'.
- 30 [Curandum ergo... manu teneatur] Gregorius I, Moralia, 1.37 (PL 75 554A-554C)
- 31 'non' of 'nonnumquam' added interlinearly.
- 32 First written 'iniusta'; 'in' erased but still visible.
- 33 Read 'inique'.
- 34 [Sciendum uero... iuste permittit] Gregorius I, Moralia, 2.10 (PL 75 563D)
- 35 'nolimus': first written 'uolumus'; 'u' corrected to 'n' interlinearly.
- 36 [Cum enim... passione murmuramus] Gregorius I, Moralia, 2.18 (PL 75 571B)
- 37 [Duobus quippe... quia tacui] Gregorius I, Moralia, 3.10 (PL 75 608B)

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- 38 Read 'amici'.
- 39 The 'in' of 'inlatae' is interlinear.
- 40 Read 'inopinatus'.
- 41 First written 'ostendit'; 'i' corrected to 'a' interlinearly.
- 42 [Saepe antiquus... infirmitatis ostendat] Gregorius I, Moralia, 3.29 (PL 75 627B-C)
- 43 Read 'inuigilat'.
- 44 'inmunda': first written 'inmuda'; 'n' added interlinearly.
- 45 'sollicite': first written 'sollite'; 'ci' added interlinearly.
- 46 'in sterquilinio': first written 'isterquilinio'; 'n' added interlinearly.
- 47 [Perfecta enim... non extollit] Gregorius I, Moralia, 2.10 (PL 75 629A-B)
- 48 [Cum ualde... tormenta pertrahantur] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.1 (PL 75 679B-681C)
- 49 The scribe first wrote 'quia mens dum mens'; then the first 'mens' was struck through.
- 50 Read 'sic'.
- 51 'autem': first written 'enim' and corrected interlinearly.
- 52 [Unde et... temporaliter aridet] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.1 (PL 75 679C-80A)
- 53 [cunctaque huius... dispectu blanditur] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.1 (PL 75 680B)
- 54 First written 'tolerat'; 'n' added interlinearly.
- 55 Read 'tristia'.
- 56 First written 'tunc'; 't' corrected to 'n' interlinearly. Gregory has 'hanc'.
- 57 Read 'terra'.
- 58 Read 'pensant'.
- 59 Read 'amore'.
- 60 'aerumna exilii in qua proiectus est laceratus intellegit quam...': read 'aerumnam exilii, in qua proiectum laceratur, intellegit, et quam...'
- 61 'illa' is interlinear.
- 62 [In Scriptura... obligatione teneantur] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.1 (PL 75 680C-81C)
- 63 The scribe left out the preposition 'a' here.
- 64 Read 'abscondat'.
- 65 [mortui enim... amoris abscondat] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.5-6 (PL 75 684C-685A)
- 66 'qui' is interlinear.
- 67 Read 'perfecte'.
- 68 'o nate unice'.
- 69 Read 'haec'.
- 70 Read 'imagine'.
- 71 Read either 'Deum' instead of 'Deus' or 'dicitur' instead of 'dicit'.
- 72 [Uia enim... repulsa quaerit] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.6-7 (PL 75 685A-686A)
- 73 First written 'inquid'; 'd' corrected to 't' interlinearly.
- 74 [In lectulo... quod quaerebat] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.3 (PL 75 683A)
- 75 'si' is interlinear.
- 76 The scribe left out a 'per' here.
- 77 Read 'aeternae'.
- 78 'uis' is interlinear.

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- 79 [Suspirat ergo... lacrimas emanat] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.8-9 (PL 75 686D)
80 First written 'metiunt'; 'i' corrected to 'u' interlinearly.
81 Read 'dum quae'.
82 [Electi ergo... eis aquarum] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.8-9 (PL 75 687A)
83 [Iusti igitur... cessatione timeatur] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.10 (PL 75 687C-D)
84 Read 'iuuet'.
85 [Ut enim... inpenditur iuuet] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.11 (PL 75 688B)
86 First written 'supernam'; sign added by scribe to indicate the 'm' was a mistake.
87 'autem' is interlinear.
88 Read 'qui'.
89 First written 'refigiunt'; 'i' corrected to 'u' interlinearly.
90 [cum terrenarum actionum... sinu requiescunt] Gregorius I, Moralia, 5.11 (PL 75 689A-C)
91 First written 'adiungitur'; 'i' corrected to 'un' interlinearly.
92 Read 'oboedire'.
93 [Omnis quippe... tergiuersationis humanae] Gregorius I, Moralia, Praefatio 2 (PL 75 519B-D)
94 Read 'quae'.
95 First written 'dormire'; 're' erased but still visible.
96 Maybe this was intended to be 'meae'?
97 'Tantum valeas quantum uolo' was forgotten by scribe and added in the bottom of the page.
98 'conseruare qui est mitis ab hoste tuam': read 'conserua requiem mitis ab hoste meam'.

